THE GLORY *of* GOING ON

R. MOFFAT GAUTREY

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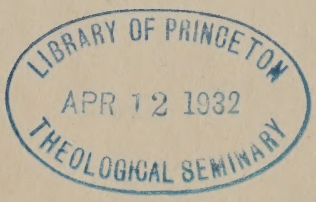

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The glory of going on

THE GLORY OF GOING ON

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BY
R. MOFFAT GAUTREY

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FOREWORD

THE sermon from which this volume derives its title, and the four immediately succeeding it, have already appeared in *The Christian World Pulpit*. I desire to acknowledge the courtesy of Messrs. James Clarke & Co. in granting me permission to include them in this series.

In preparing for the press sermons preached at widely separated intervals of time, and designed to meet the need of varying congregations, it is difficult to recover the exact viewpoints of their original utterance. Yet, if Christ be the theme, they cannot entirely lack cohesion. Throughout my ministry I have earnestly striven to present Christ as Saviour, Master, and King. In that threefold relationship his claim is vital to human happiness and usefulness. If, through the printed page, I can succeed in winning for my Lord the faith, obedience, and loyalty of other lives, I shall gratefully regard that as an extension of my pulpit effort, and rejoice that I have found a wider sphere in which to show forth his praise.

R. M. G.

LONDON, S.W.17.
12 ELMBOURNE ROAD,

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I

THE GLORY OF GOING ON

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—2 *Timothy* 2. 3.

By the common consent of those most competent to judge, this is the last letter Paul ever wrote. The hand that held the pen was manacled with a felon's chain. The preacher was in prison, and without the cloak which he had left in Troas was shivering in the dungeon in the chill autumnal air. He was awaiting the judgment of the most capricious tyrant that ever misruled an empire, knowing that each sunset might be the last upon which his eyes would ever look, and that with the dawn some grim-faced executioner would knock at his cell door and lead him out to ignominious death. Those are sore straits for any man to be in, especially for a man who carries a conscience void of offense. It must be a terrible ordeal to be pilloried and punished, even when you are a conscious malefactor, enduring a righteous doom; but to be harried and persecuted and slain at sight when you have done nothing worthy of bonds or imprisonment must be one of those exasperating, heart-breaking experiences which test the fiber of forbearance even in the finest soul.

How does the old preacher face up to these appalling facts? Is there anything apologetic in his attitude,

any sign of wavering in his brave spirit? Is there any cry for mercy, or sob of self-commiseration in his throat? Does he anywhere express the wish that he had never hazarded his life in the great adventure, and that even now he is prepared to turn back from following after Christ? Surely, he has proved that preaching Christ, and him crucified, is by no means a profitable occupation. Have the stones of Lystra daunted him, and the stripes of Philippi made him afraid? Has his courage begun to quail? No! There is not a quiver in him anywhere. Friendless, but without fear, he still confronts the foe. Girt about with the dignity which despises death, he dares "the tyrant's brandished steel, the lion's gory mane," and hurls defiance in the very face of hell.

Paul was one of those men you can neither bend nor break. Principle was the rock upon which he stood secure. Faith was the shield which his tormentors could not shatter. Great convictions, tested and tempered in many a fire of affliction, kept his heart from bitterness and his spirit from repining. Jerusalem had excommunicated him, but God had given him a place among them that are sanctified. Rome had made a jail-bird of him, but Jesus had made him God's freedman and wrapped his soul in the peace which passeth all understanding. He speaks of himself as "an ambassador in bonds." What a startling paradox! Ambassadors live in kings' palaces. They clothe themselves in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. Who ever heard of an ambassador in jail? Everywhere he describes him-

self as "the prisoner of Christ at Rome." Note the splendor of that conjunction. He was not Nero's prisoner. Had he been merely Nero's prisoner he would have fretted his heart away. He was "the prisoner of Christ," and it makes a world of difference if you take Jesus into jail with you. Jesus can turn a prison into a Paradise, a prisoner's bench into a pulpit, a felon's bonds into a silent exposition of his gospel. That was why Paul rejoiced in his afflictions. "I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole prætorian guard." The household troops became his audience, and furnished fresh recruits for the great campaign. Nero might drink himself blind drunk, murder his mother, play the mountebank at Corinth, set fire to Rome, and eventually slay himself in the vain endeavor to escape the ghosts which haunted him day and night; but in all his brutal reign of terror there was one man whom he could never terrify—the little tent-maker out of Tarsus. True, there was not much of him, but every ounce was solid gold. His critics down in Corinth declared "his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible"; and for once the critics were perfectly correct. There is a contemporary document which gives a description of the personal appearance of the apostle which is very far from flattering. Onesiphorus was sent to meet Paul at the crossroads. Titus had told him what sort of a man to look for; and presently he sees, coming

along, a little, undersized Jew, with bald head and bandy legs, a long nose and large-knit eyebrows. Not exactly the face of an Adonis, nor the figure of an Apollo! But you do not measure a man by his inches, or determine his worth by his weight. Little Doctor Watts was right:

> "I must be measured by my soul;
> The mind's the standard of the man."

And when you put Paul under that gauge, he assumes the proportions of a Christian Hercules, and strides the world like a Colossus.

No one had a better right to preach from the text "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong!" Whether Paul used that text, or preferred to preach from another, made no odds. The sermon was the same—the sermon was himself, as every true preacher's sermon must be whose character corroborates his creed. We have developed some strange ideas as to what constitutes a sermon. I have heard it described as "a positive work of art." If it were nothing more than that, it was far too artful to live. I have heard it described as "a great intellectual effort." But if it were nothing more, it had been better if it had been still-born. A true sermon is a bit of a man's quivering soul; it is a part of his immortal spirit, which he pours out and sets fire to, in his eager desire to help Christ save the world. And if it is not that, it is nothing, and even less than nothing.

In this epistle Paul is not preaching to a congregation. He is preaching to an individual. The letter is

addressed "To Timothy, my dearly beloved son"; and in the Greek a diminutive is used, the word which a mother uses for her little child, and it indicates exactly the tender nature of the bond which bound the gray old veteran to this young novice in the great comradeship of Christ. Timothy was of a timorous disposition. He lacked the granite strength, that firm tenacity of purpose which made his spiritual father a peer in the realm of God. Timothy had the misfortune to be young. He took too hardly and suffered too acutely the bruisings and buffetings of life. Youth is not regarded as a misfortune nowadays. It is age that has become a crime. But every period of life has its own handicap. The handicap of youth is its inexperience; and for inexperience a man is frequently compelled to pay a terrific price. Every young man thinks that he knows—but the old man knows that he knows, and he has purchased his knowledge by pain. It is worth while to be growing old to have learned this, that God never leaves you in a *cul-de-sac*. You cannot know that at twenty. Your experience of his grace covers too brief a span. That is why the panics of youth are so paralyzing. In the first soul-shattering experience of life we imagine that the bottom has fallen out of the universe, and that God has abdicated or been deposed. But at fifty you come to realize that every dark turns to dawn, that every grief finds cure, that even the most fearsome gloom was but "shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly." That is why old age is so often characterized by a serene and sober optimism. Life has done its worst,

and death stands ready at the door; but the Lord of life and death is more than a match for any terror these can hurl. The soul that has had full experience of his redeeming, sanctifying grace is always the victor and never the victim of mere circumstances. But such high triumph rarely rejoices our earlier years. It comes as Heaven's calm benediction to those who through long years have fought the good fight of faith. And Timothy's triumph was still unachieved. He was timorous, inexperienced, and suffered the still graver handicap of a frail physique. He tenanted a body which always had an ache or a pain or a spasm somewhere; and such fragility constitutes a fearful clog to a soul's endeavor. Matter reacts on mind, and the frailties of the flesh are capable of bringing the spirit into sore bondage to the demons of doubt and despair. Timothy was easily browbeaten, frequently discouraged, sometimes down under the juniper tree wishing he was dead. He needed a tonic for his mind, not less than for the frailties of his body; and here is the magnificent medicine Paul prescribes for a soul cast down, and almost ready to cast itself away, "Now then, my son, be strong . . . endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, . . . for God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline." It rings out like an inspiriting bugle call. It is at once a challenge and an enheartenment. It is a challenge to the base spirit of fear. It is an enheartenment, stimulating a timorous man to quit his timidity and to attempt a hero's task.

There was need—urgent, imperative need—for some such rallying of a wavering faith and failing energy. You will need to read between the lines of this epistle to view correctly the situation which had developed, and which called insistently for swift correction. Timothy was the minister of the church at Ephesus, and it had proved no bed of roses upon which to lie. There are some churches which have in them more thorns than roses, and if they can only push a few thorns into the parson's pillow, they regard it as a master-stroke of strategy. Some of the Lord's people are very peculiar people, and some who call themselves by his name are in reality none of his. In the eyes of the critics and cavillers at Ephesus nothing their minister either said or did was right. They were experts at finding fault. They said he was too young. They said he was too strict in his discipline. They said he was too rigid in his doctrine. They said—ah! What did they not say? Some tongues get so loose upon their hinges that they wag themselves in every evil way; and for such a curse there is no cure, except by processes of surgery! There were defections and divisions in the church, moral clamor and theological strife; and, in addition, the massed antagonism of that great pagan population which thronged the streets and crowded the quays of that busy seaport town. The Temple of Diana was a far greater focus of attraction than the cross of Christ; and the temple-tramplers were not overscrupulous in their methods of dealing with the disciples of the despised Nazarene. Paul had had experi-

ence of their insenate fury. He knew what it was to fight with beasts at Ephesus; and his young colleague had been enduring the same sore travail until the strain had become intolerable to be borne. One fact is clear: Timothy was down, broken beneath his burden, overwhelmed with the depression which is born out of defeat. His letter to Paul was obviously one of resignation. He was tired in body. He was jaded in mind. He was sick in soul. He was so baffled and bruised and beaten that he felt he could no longer continue the unequal struggle. He must cease to be a minister of Christ. That was the whimpering cry of his distress, and some of us can afford to sympathize with his heart's anguish inasmuch as we have endured a similar agony.

How does the old preacher address himself to a perilous mood like that? Does he for one moment admit the right of any man to despair? Does he suggest that his junior colleague has suffered sufficient to justify his retiring from the firing line? Paul was a war-scarred veteran, and he knew too well the exigencies of battle to counsel cessation or retreat. "Stand up," he cries, "and brace yourself for bigger and braver battle, for the worst is yet to come." That is a real stroke of genius. Few of us have attempted to cure a sick soul by the prospect of more arduous conflict; but it is the true medicine for melancholy. To indulge the mood of self-pity is to become the laughing-stock of devils. The surest way to irretrievable disaster is tamely to submit to defeat. Any man who is down under the juniper tree has a jaundiced

soul, and the only way to heal him is to get him up and out into the fight once more. That is why Paul's sympathy is stripped of all false sentiment. "Stand up," he cries. "If you had wanted a nice, soft job you should never have entered the ministry. The ministry was not made for milk-sops; it was made for men. Pioneers who are engaged in blazing a trail for the chariot of Christ must be capable of large endurance. It can never be easy to follow the Crucified. You must drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism. You must watch with him in his Gethsemane and follow him along the Via Dolorosa, carrying his gaunt cross until you come to Calvary—and there, count it joy if you be crucified upon it, for only thus can you help Christ save the world. Rekindle the divine gift you received at your ordination. The fire of your first enthusiasm is almost quenched. Put your hands about it and let the Spirit breathe upon it until the spark is quickened to a flame. Be not ashamed of Christ, nor of me his prisoner; and see ye to it that Christ has never need to be ashamed of you. I adjure you to preach the Word: keep at it, in season and out of season, refuting, checking, and exhorting men. Never lose patience with them, and never give up your teaching. Whatever happens, be self-possessed: flinch from no suffering: do your work as an evangelist: fulfill all your duties as a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. The last drops of my own sacrifice are being wrung out: the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth it is on

you, and on others like you, that the brunt of the battle now must fall. I beseech you be not numbered with the base deserters, who quit their ranks before the rush of steel. Join yourself to the knight-companions of the cross, and take your share of hardship as a loyal soldier of Jesus Christ; for to refuse the Cross is to forfeit the crown, and to shrink from the battle is to earn the ignominy of infamous retreat."

Such was Paul's method of dealing with a diffident disciple, a warrior who was in process of unbuckling his armor before the fight was done. That was how Paul cured a man who felt the lure of ease, and was in peril of proving recreant to high ideals, because the path thereto was a path of pain. But why should we stage that drama in ancient Ephesus, as though it belonged to a far-off and almost forgotten day? That peril still persists. It is a seduction of the devil which besets us all. There are many voices urging us to minimize our efforts. The slack hand and the ungirt loin promise such peaceful days, such nights of calm repose, that in the very midst of the struggle we begin to ask, Of what avail are all my toils and tears? When that question begins to revolve itself within our minds we are on the very verge of perfidy, and yielding to it the devil has us for his own to plunge into perdition at his pleasure. For, if you turn back from following after Christ, whom are you going to follow? If you refuse the service which is perfect freedom, what base bondage are you going to endure? If you desert from under the banner beneath which martyrs strode to victory, under what black banner

of rebellion are you going to enlist? For you cannot be masterless men. Life is so constituted that it must yield allegiance somewhere. Right down the generations the choice persists. It is God, or Mammon: it is Christ, or Belial. Choose ye then whom ye will serve; and if you have chosen Christ, go on, in God's great name go on!

Any fool can resign! It does not require a large amount of genius to resign. A pot of ink and a half a sheet of notepaper is a snare of Satan to scores of men and women in our churches. They do in church what they dare not do in business. If, in commercial life, men flung up their jobs on the same flimsy pretexts as those they offer in vacating office in the kingdom of God, they would be in bankruptcy in six months. Some people think it a sign of superior cleverness to tender a resignation, but it is always an egregious folly, and frequently a traitorous deed. It needs a grim, soldierly quality to enable a man to hold on, when everything seems to be dissolving in disaster. There is a passage in one of the psalms, white with the fierce flame of scorn: "The men of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle." That was the indelible stigma of their disgrace, and if we would save ourselves from a similar contempt, we must, somehow, cultivate a courage which will not quail. We can, at least, find inspiration from our contemplation of the heroes of the faith, and discover the secret of their constancy. Their persistence was all summed up in Christ, in their mystic fellowship with him, and the reinforcement which

they thus derived. Their courage was not an empty braggadocio. They endured as seeing Him who is invisible; and only by a similar vision shall we save our souls alive.

Sooner or later we have to determine whether life to us is to be a holiday excursion or a great crusade; an ephemeral delight or an enduring discipline. Upon that decision hangs our destiny. Apart from some gallant quest there can be no glorious conquest. To pursue the line of least resistance in order to escape the world's antagonism, or to seek to achieve prosperity by compromising conscience and sacrificing principle, is to put your finest powers in pawn. Duty is often an irksome yoke which chafes the soul that wears the harness of Christ, but we cast it aside at our peril. If conscience is atrophied within us, it will avail us nothing to be able to boast that our withers are unwrung. Why should we hesitate to speak the truth lest its utterance should jeopardize our popularity? Popularity is but a rainbow-tinted bubble which the slightest accident can irremediably destroy, but principle is a part of those imperishable things which never can be shaken. Our testimony for Jesus Christ must never depend upon a congenial atmosphere. Eloquence in the prayer-meeting is a poor substitute for dumbness in the workshop. It is where Satan's seat is, where the atmosphere is hot with the breath of blasphemy that our protest against ungodliness is the most vital and effective. Yet how difficult it is to display the badge of Christ in the midst of his most virulent foes! The insistent temptation

which besets us all is to hide our lamp under a bushel, and to seek our own ease by refusing to acknowledge our allegiance to him. And all the while, in our heart of hearts, we know that that is the shameful coward's course. For such pusillanimity there is only one possible cure. It is in the firm, vigorous, unswerving resolve to follow the Christ, the King; to go straight on, though all hell erects its barricades and seeks to arrest our progress; to shirk no burden, to refuse no battle, but gladly to share the travail which makes his kingdom come. Take your share of hardship like good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Whether men frown or smile, congratulate or condemn, matters not one jot or tittle. We can live without the applause of men so long as we carry the consciousness of the approbation of the King of kings.

II

A CALL TO ADVANCE

Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.—*Joshua* 1. 2.

"Moses my servant is dead." The announcement is bald enough to be almost commonplace in its unemotional expression. Judged by our standards it seems entirely inadequate to record the decease of so conspicuous a life. Has God no panegyric to pronounce upon the man who has served the interests of his kingdom through such length of days and with such amazing fidelity and devotion? Apparently none! Then is the Divine Taskmaster indifferent to the toil, and tears, and travail through which his hero-hearted servants achieve success? By no means! God can always afford to wait, but he can never afford to forget. His appreciation of honest work is marked by many an inward and hidden sign. The final verdict is in eternity, the ultimate recompense is laid up in heaven.

We are great at obituary notices. We feel we have failed unless our eloquence blossoms into a funeral oration; and often we allow our sentiment a merely morbid exercise. Why do we wait until a man is dead before we utter our estimate of his worth? Why did we not cheer the living heart while it was still warm with the impulse of loving service? If we have

neglected that, we had better be speechless over the silent coffin, for he whom we might have helped is beyond the aid of our belated praise. We simply degrade the pulpit if we swathe it with costly crape when we have permitted the man who occupied it to pass on with his burden unshared and his love unrecompensed by our affection. The wreath upon the grave will wither, but the kindnesses with which we have garlanded the soul can never die.

There is no false sentiment in the heart of the Infinite. He does not tarry till the toil is done, and then strain the resources of his vocabulary to find some pæan of praise. By many a whispered word of grace, and by many a silent token of his Spirit, he evidences his approbation, and makes strong our hearts to labor and to endure. His last "Well done" is simply the summing-up of a long series of encouragements, and when they have been so ungrudgingly bestowed, the final encomium need be but brief. Few words and fit are sufficient to express Heaven's richest and tenderest benediction.

"Moses my servant." Do you not detect the accent of pride in the pronoun which indicates possession? God does not refer to this man as though he were the property of the race from which he sprang. He does not speak of him as your emancipator and benefactor, your leader and law-giver. He uses the term which relates him to himself in a bond which never can be broken. The ties of kinship and chieftainship are all subordinated to the deeper and more enduring claim. He was theirs only in a secondary sense—

lent to them for a season to guard and guide; but the divine proprietorship was primary and perpetual, never to be surrendered or obscured. "My servant," for my fingers fashioned him; "my servant," for my hands ordained him to the ministry of my will; "my servant," for I put my Spirit upon him, and filled him with wisdom and girt him with power; "my servant," admitted to my great household, and from my presence he shall go out no more.

You have only to read the passage in its correct relationship, and with the proper light upon the page, to hear the tone of God's exultation, and to see how he glories in one so virile in soul and so upright in heart. To be claimed by the King is to be clothed with a dignity which can never be diminished. To be permitted a place in the royal service is to receive a patent of nobility which can never perish. Crowns and coronets may tarnish, ermine and purple may fade, but to be acknowledged "my servant" by the blessed and only Potentate is to share in the splendor of a kingdom without end. The worker's true eulogy is his work; and if that has on it the seal and approbation of the Highest, there is need for nothing more beside. The blare of trumpets and the boom of guns are quite irrelevant. A man's life and labor are the indications of his worth, and these alone are his permanent memorials. To be accepted of God, and approved of Heaven, is the highest honor of all.

"Moses my servant is dead." Then the march must be arrested, the advancing host must halt. Without the leader the followers are left forlorn. There is

gloom in the camp and hesitancy in the ranks, and to go forward under such conditions is only to fail. When Great-Heart has fallen, the faint-hearts will flee. With the passing of the giant soul, the men of smaller stature will inevitably feel the chill of craven fear. Let us turn back into the desert, and dig our graves among the sand dunes, where the bones of our fathers lie, for to invade the territories and assault the citadels of these powerful and embattled tribes is to dare a doom more terrible than that of those who perished in the way. The conquest of the land has become impossible and the vision of liberty a baseless dream.

Who talks like that? Not God! Such terms as those have never entered into the speech of heaven. A million men may pass away, but the pillars of the eternal throne are still secure. No man is indispensable to the divine government. The greatest that ever lived was only a servant, and the completion of his service was merely a comma in the history of God's dealing with the race. Another hand may take the pen, but the writing of the record goes on without any interruption. Another arm may wield the sword, but the battle proceeds to the ultimate and inevitable victory. No death, however exalted, can put a period to the purposes which are supreme. Gladstone, the great, may be carried to his grave, but the government survives. Victoria, the good, may surrender her noble charge and cease at once to work and live, but the sun arises upon the morrow and the world swings on as though the shadow had never

rested upon her imperial throne. There is a fundamental philosophy in those words inscribed upon the Wesley medallion in Westminster Abbey, "God buries his workmen, but carries on his work."

"Moses my servant is dead." What a dire calamity! What will the Lord do now? There is not another like unto Moses among all the children of Israel. Who is there to stand in the gap? The vacancy is so vast that it will surely be difficult to discover a man of adequate breadth and stature worthily to fill the empty place and sustain the tremendous load. Can one be found at such short notice? Ah! that is the feeble question of the poor prisoners of time. We are shut up within the horizon of the immediate now; and because we have no vision of the future we are frequently the victims of surprise, almost amounting to dismay. God is never nonplussed, never at a disadvantage. Nothing can take the Eternal unawares. The crisis that fills us with panic is simply the turning of a page in the book of his remembrance. We speak sometimes as though God were bankrupt. Good men are scarce, we say, and we grudge their going, as though the divine resources were quite unequal to the heavy demands of the future. When Spurgeon passed away, a religious weekly headed its premier page with the tragic announcement, "The Last Great Puritan is dead," What folly of unbelief! The great Craftsman, who is fashioning the world in righteousness and conforming the race to the image of his Son, can always find another tool, sharpened and ready to his hand. He lays aside a Spurgeon and takes

up a Dixon. He puts down a Dale and lifts a Jowett. He buries a Moody and raises a Gipsy Smith. And thus through the lapse of years the work goes on in unbroken continuity. The heroes of the faith are not yet extinct. The age of chivalry is never ended. Our Warrior-God is even now forging a battle-ax of still more finely tempered steel with which to cleave the ranks of the adversary. In his quiver there is many a polished shaft that has not yet been fitted to the bow. Do not distress yourselves unduly. There is no dearth of warriors for the great crusade. Only see to it that ye yourselves are ready to respond to the bugle call. For all you know God has set his heart on you to appoint you a captain of his army, or to make you a standard-bearer in the legions of his cross. He proceeds by the methods of a divine election, and those methods are not arbitrary, governed by a mere caprice. He chooses those who by diligence in well-doing have deepened their capacity for wider service and a more extended usefulness. Every soldier carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack; but his right to wield it will depend absolutely upon his fidelity to common duty and the efficiency which such fidelity invariably produces.

"Moses my servant is dead." Then Joshua must step up from the ranks to the place of honor and chief distinction. He has shown himself worthy of the confidence of both God and man. When Aaron the priest proved recreant, and the whole congregation lapsed into apostasy, this man was found faithful among the faithless. When Miriam became a mocker

and spoke revilingly against Moses, Joshua's heart must have been hot with indignation as he heard her flippant and foolish speech; and if the Lord had not suddenly intervened to vindicate and justify the authority of his servant, Joshua would have found a way by which to silence the tongue of her arrogant pride. When the spies returned from surveying the land of promise, he was one of the two stout-hearted who flinched not from the impending battle. By many a token through the slow-moving years he demonstrated both his faith in God and his devotion and loyalty to his much-loved chief. And those are the qualities which elevate a man and fit him for the exercise of highest office. No man has earned the right to rule who has not learned how implicitly to obey.

"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people." Then is there to be no space in which to mourn? Must the march be resumed by men whose eyes are blinded by tears? Is there to be no time in which to recover from the shattering blow of so heavy a bereavement? Turn back a page in the history, and you will find that God grants an interval in which grief may have its legitimate exercise. He is no Despot indifferent to the pain of tortured hearts. He whose fingers fashioned us knows how frail we are, and the bruised reed he will not break. Thirty days they wept for Moses in the plains of Moab, and though no man visited the God-dug sepulcher, all their thoughts were focused there. But now that the days of their mourning are ended, their drooping souls must be revived

by an inspiriting call to service. Grief too long indulged is a fearful waste of energy. Too great a price may be paid for the luxury of tears. Sorrow is sent to sanctify and not to enervate our powers. The finest balm for wounded hearts is to be found in consecrated toil. We misconceive the whole ministry of sorrow, and frustrate its divinest purpose, if we permit our grief to unfit us for the task which still awaits our doing. We honor the mighty dead much more effectually by committing ourselves both body and soul to the furtherance of the cause in which they lived and died, than by merely lamenting their decease and garlanding the graves in which they sleep. "Now therefore arise!" That is not the imperious command of an uncompassionate King. It is the invigorating tonic of a Master-Physician, who knows how to quiet the quivering nerves and brace the enfeebled frame for further effort. To allow us to lapse into moody self-pity would be the greatest disservice God could render to any one of us. And knowing that, he lays his hand upon us in the hour of our desolation and bids us "Arise! Dash the tears from your eyes. Gird yourselves for the conflict. Quit you like men. Be strong! The land is before you. The prize may be yours. The triumph awaits you. The victory is secure. Hesitate no longer. Let the whole line advance and pass over this Jordan into the land which I do give to you."

Such was the trumpet-call which rang out its challenge over the hosts of Israel as they stood on the confines of the promised land. But even that did not

entirely dislodge the doubts which dwelt in timorous hearts. Jordan was in spate, and the turbid waters showed no sign of going down. Bridges had not then been builded, and how was this great multitude to cross without either ford or ferry? On the other side the wrathful foes with watchful eyes looked out from their mountain fastnesses, and were perfectly prepared to dispute the passage, and still more determined to prevent them from taking possession of the fruitful vineyards and fertile fields which they and their fathers had planted and brought into cultivation. There were precipitous crags to climb, and strong-walled cities to overthrow, and kings and captains and men of war to fight with and to subdue. How could this thing be done? Were they workers of miracles? No! but God was. And when God says "Go!" He goeth before and maketh a way for all who will follow him. When God says "Fight!" he fighteth for us, and none can withstand his invincible might when he hath made bare his holy arm. The power that smote a path through the threatening waters and made the desert a highway will not be turned back by the swellings of Jordan. He who rebuked the insolence of Pharaoh and crushed the pride of Egypt with one grip of his fingers, flinging horse and rider into the depths of the sea, is not likely to be confounded by the petty confederacies of Canaan. When God makes a bequest none can withhold or filch from us the gift which he has bestowed. "Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel."

But the children of Israel are not the only people of his choice. We also are the sheep of his pasture, the objects of his infinite regard. We who have obtained a like precious faith are heirs with them of exceeding great and precious promises. We are guilty of most grievous error if we read these ancient Scriptures as though they were the dry and musty records of a long-buried and half-forgotten history. The past is imperishable; it lives in the present, and pours its wealth without stint into the treasury of to-day. From these well-thumbed pages God's voice is still speaking, and the Spirit-educated ear will be quick to discern the old music transposed to a more modern key. God is perpetually repeating his great affirmations. Moses is dead, but the march continues. Paul has departed, but the cross abides. Wesley is gone, but Methodism lives. Men may go and customs may change, but the city which hath foundation is still eternal in the heavens. Through all the vicissitudes of the revolving years the Church of the Crucified is making progress. The battle is not yet won, and we may not doff our armor until victory has crowned our arms. The men who stood in the vanguard have fallen at their posts, but the true Leader of the hosts, though invisible, is on the field, and will neither faint nor fail. O men! hear the word of the Lord: "Arise, go over this Jordan." This is no barrier, only a boundary line; it was made for you to cross, and on its farther bank you yet shall build your monument of triumph. Step down into the river. Its waves shall shrink from before your feet, and you shall pass

over dryshod to the other side. The ark of the covenant is no longer upon the shoulders of the priests, but the covenant-keeping God is in the midst of his covenanted people. Let the triumphant shout ascend: "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." In your confidence of that you carry the pledge of ultimate victory. What though the forces of infidelity, frivolity, and vice oppose our path, their unholy alliance is doomed to dissolution. The world cannot withstand its ancient Conqueror, and, though it may rage in malice and vent its spleen upon us, it must crouch, at last, in submission at his feet. Let us go up and possess the land, for we are well able to do it. Let the whole line advance! Our God is marching on.

"He is breaking down the barriers,
He is casting up the way;
He is calling for his angels to build
up the gates of the day:
But his angels here are human, not the
shining hosts above,
For the drum-beats of his army are
the heart-beats of our love."

III

A CALL FOR COURAGE

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.—*Joshua* 1.9.

THESE words were originally addressed to a man upon whose shoulders there had been suddenly imposed the burden of a tremendous responsibility. Joshua was a prince of the tribe of Ephraim, born in the land of Goshen, and therefore an eye-witness of all the wonders wrought out by the hand of Israel's redeeming God. From his youth up he had been trained to the profession of arms by the sheer necessities of his people's peril. He had become inured to the hardships of the desert, the stern discipline of bivouac and battle. He had led the hosts of Israel against the hordes of Amalek, and had not flinched from any field where hard fighting was to be done. He had climbed, as far as he was permitted to climb, up the awful steep of Sinai, where Jehovah sat enthroned amid the thunders, canopied by clouds shot through with the lightning flash. Next to Moses, he had come nearest to the splendor of that sublime and awful Presence, at whose near approach the people had exceedingly quaked and feared. None would have dared to say that this man lacked courage. In his virile character the fearlessness of the warrior was wedded to the passion of the prophet; and when those two

types of strength combine in one vigorous personality they form an amalgam of mental and moral energy which is almost invincible.

But the greater the man, the more conscious he is of his human limitations. There are some natures so shallow that they have no depths to sound; and they go through life, apparently, without discovering how superficial they really are. Their existence is all upon the surface, seen in a moment, withering in an hour. They have no center of faith, no hidden altar at which the soul, robed in the raiment of reverence, ministers as priest before the Lord. But the man of finer faculty, who has made his body a temple of the Holy Ghost, knows full well that he has this treasure in a very earthen vessel, and its capacity is often taxed to contain the glory and fulfill the word which has been revealed to him. And that was the case with Joshua as he stood that day before the Lord of hosts. He was not afraid of God. He was afraid of himself. There is a fear that is born of guilt, coming swiftly on the heels of conscious wrongdoing. There is a fear that is born of cowardice, and at a crisis it breeds a fatal paralysis of mind and will. But Joshua was afflicted with neither of these. He could meet the divine scrutiny with heart unveiled, because he carried within him a conscience void of offense. In the fateful hour of battle he had never faltered, nor turned his back to the foe. But as he looked that day across Jordan and thought of the coming days and of the part that he must play therein, he was conscious of a tremor he had never felt before.

Hitherto the supreme responsibility had rested upon another. Henceforth, it was a burden which he himself must bear, and he felt unequal to the load.

Strong man though he was, he had good cause to tremble. Cast a look back over those forty years and survey the stupendous task of his immediate predecessor. "Moses was a very meek man, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth;" and yet even his equable temperament, calm with the dignity of conscious strength, was often strained to the breaking point. Perfidy and profligacy, disaffection and disloyalty, complaining and repining—these were the ingredients of the bitter cup which his people had wrung out for him to drink; and never a day dawned but his righteous soul was vexed with some fresh cause of clamor and strife. Do you wonder that his impatience broke out on two or three occasions in fierce invective and angry malediction? He would have been more than human had he maintained his equanimity in the face of such gainsaying and inveterate unbelief. And these were the people whom Joshua had been called to lead, to inspire with courage, and fortify with zeal. To conquer a hostile country with such a crowd of cravens at his back seemed to him like tempting destiny and offering a premium to calamity. Those were the feelings uppermost in Joshua's heart, the thoughts surging through his quick brain; and the strong man bowed himself and quailed at the fearful prospect which confronted him.

It was in response to those doubts and fears that the words of my text were uttered. It was a call for

courage, addressed to the need of the immediate moment, but intended also to make strong his heart for all that the coming years might bring. Glance through the passage and you will see how marvelously God reads and interprets this man's unuttered thought. Joshua speaks no word, the conversation seems all one-sided, but the unerring eye of Omniscience detects the secret emotion of the soul before ever it can leap to the birth in speech. From the divine assurances you may legitimately deduce the human objections which were whispering themselves through the galleries of this man's mind. May I, without irreverence, suggest the unreported part of the dialogue? The conversation is introduced by Jehovah, Lord of hosts.

"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel."

"But," says Joshua, "I can never wrest this land from the idolaters. They hold it with too intense a grip. They have provisioned their fortresses, they have manned their walls, they have barred their gates, they have left the countryside a wilderness. How can I possibly succeed?"

"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you," saith the Lord. "From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast."

"But I have never held the position of chieftain. He who went before me was a man of giant mold, and I am altogether of a meaner stature. How can I hope to prevail against the rebels, of whom he almost despaired? How can I expect to subdue the foes, against whom he was not permitted to match his massive strength?"

And the Lord makes answer: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

"But with such untrained and unheroic followers, how can I extirpate the heathen from the land which was promised unto my fathers? Even though we conquered in the battle, this unchivalrous mob would immediately begin to squabble as to which tribe should have the lion's share, and the foe would be swift to profit by our dissensions."

"Be strong and of good courage," says Jehovah, "for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous."

"But I do not feel strong," says Joshua, "and I am not at all courageous. The men who withstood Moses to the face and rewarded his patience with apostasy, will dispute my authority also; and what credentials can I carry that none shall dare to controvert?"

And the Unseen breaks in almost abruptly, and closes the conversation with this: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be

not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest."

At that point the dialogue ceases, the disputation ends. Every doubt has been dissolved, the spirit of fear cast out. The man who had trembled upon his knees rises already a victor. He has conquered himself. Nay! shall I not rather say that God has conquered him? Yes! that is the better way of putting it, God has conquered him; and the man who has been subdued by the Holy Spirit will be subdued by none beside. From that deep spiritual travail he emerges a new man, with a new light upon his face, a new lilt in his voice, a new power in his arm, and thereafter all men will wonder at him, as at one who was slain and made alive again. Only by crucifixion can we know the deathless energy of a divine resurrection; only from the ruins of our self-trust can we attain to the confidence which reposes itself upon Omnipotence, and derives its strength from thence. This man will never fail. He will walk the world shoulder to shoulder with the Infinite; and the power that made Moses mighty will make Joshua invincible as a captain of the hosts of God. Even now his voice takes on a more regal tone. At the close of that memorable interview these were the company orders he issued to his officers for immediate execution: "Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you." There is no if, or but, or peradventure about that great

proclamation. It comes from the lips of a man who has held high audience with Heaven, and its accent of certainty is not a presumption but an inspiration. This is not the empty boast of a braggart, swaggering with a sense of self-sufficiency. This is the speech of a suppliant, whose prayer has been heard and answered, and who knows that the Lord of hosts is with him—and that therefore he cannot fail.

But let me return to the text. I have scarcely struck out a note of its fourfold chime, and I must hasten, or you will miss the melody.

1. Listen to the clear-cut note of the treble bell. "Have not I commanded thee?" That is the leading line in the score of heaven's music, and it rang out its highest pitch of ecstasy in Joshua's believing and rejoicing heart. The secret source of his inward peace lay in this, that not in his own name, but in the name of Another, he went forth to administer justice and to proclaim the righteous law. Behind him there lay the august authority of Israel's God, whose word can never be broken. It is a magnificent thing to get your commission direct from the King. To receive it second-hand from some petty underling, from some pompous, self-satisfied fellow servant, is to exercise office with a vague unrest at heart. You are never quite sure that he has not forged the document, or issued it under some misapprehension. You are never fully persuaded in your own mind that there is not a defect about it somewhere; and you are haunted by the fear that some day someone will arise and successfully dispute the validity of your orders. I have the

profoundest pity for the man who must needs go, cap in hand, to the Vatican at Rome, and humbly and respectfully request the Pope, of his large magnanimity, kindly to recognize him as an authoritative minister of Jesus Christ. I cannot measure the chagrin of those who once went in solemn deputation upon that egregious errand, and were turned from the doors as hireling impostors and no true shepherds of the sheep. Served them right! They should not have gone. Such ecclesiastical snobbery ought to be snubbed. If I never owed a Pope of Rome a vote of thanks before, I owed him one that day, when he sent that party packing and told them they were not even within sight of the apostolical succession. I have no doubt that those same crestfallen men would denounce me as a schismatic, and pronounce the sacraments, administered by my unepiscopal fingers, to be perfectly virtueless and invalid. But for such fulminations I care no jot. The true minister of Jesus Christ needs the imprimatur of neither Pope nor presbyter. If he be truly ordained, then Christ ordained him before ever the church laid hands upon him. And if he has never felt the pressure of those nail-pierced palms, and thrilled through every fiber of his being to the mystic touch of the Nazarene, I care not what ecclesiastical contrivance he may have passed through, he is a dog in the sanctuary, and has no right to the exercise of holiest office. Carry the certificate of heaven in your own heart and conscience, and the puerile ban of a perishing ecclesiastic will not greatly trouble you. "Have not I commanded thee?" That

is the interrogation of God, and if your answer to that is "Yes!" let nothing arrest your steps. Go on, though all hell may oppose your path. That path lies clear before you, wind-swept and thorn-strewn it may be; but you are cowards unfaithful to your own great destiny, and recreant to Jesus Christ, if you do not pursue it resolutely to the end.

2. The second bell is a rich contralto. It does not lead, but it makes a powerful second. "Be strong and of a good courage." Joshua could not have afforded to dispense with the accent of that additional message. It was strength he needed; it was courage he lacked, and God supplied both energy and bravery and sent him forth to battle, armed in his own great panoply of power. But how can strength be imparted to another? Here is a man crippled and paralyzed. What can you do for him? "Buy him a crutch," you say. Very well, buy him a crutch; purchase the best that surgical science can produce, pad it at the point where the friction is most severe. Give it him. Now, my poor fellow, is that crutch comfortable? "Well, yes!" he says, "within limits." Aye, within limits, and the limits are most severe. All you have done is to provide a prop upon which his weakness may lean its weariness. In spite of your beneficence the man is a cripple still. But what else can we do for him? Call in the skillful surgeon and let him put the ankle-bones into their sockets, confirm the feeble knees, repair the wasted tissue, revitalize the nervous energy, and lo! the man leaps and laughs in the joy of a rejuvenated life. And that is what God does for us. He

says, "Be strong," and immediately the loose joints are put in place, and the bones which sin had broken do rejoice. He repairs the emaciated muscle of our moral manhood, restores the spent forces of our spiritual vigor, and sends us forth to battle strong in the strength which God supplies through his eternal Son.

Here is a man anæmic. Look at his pallid face and bloodless lips. The red life-tide is ebbing away somewhere. What will you do for him? Give him a stimulant, enrich his diet, let him have plenty of fresh air and healthful exercise. Is that all you can do for him? Why, the man is positively dying upon his feet, and you are talking of a stimulant. He wants blood. And if that stricken life is dear unto you, there is something else you can do, and if you are worthy of the name of father you will not hesitate a moment to decide. You can consent to the arteries of your own flesh being opened, that the full flood-tide of your superabundant energy may flow in to replenish the exhausted treasury of the child's heart. And that is what God does for us. He says: "Be strong," and straightaway reinforces the command with a divine enduement by which the strength of His Spirit is infused into our enfeebled souls. We conquer in the battle, not because we are cleverer than other folk, and not necessarily because we are better than other folk, but because to our inherent weakness there has been super-added the deathless dynamic of the Holy Ghost. That is the method by which the saints prevail.

"Be strong and of a good courage." Ah, yes! you say, you can revitalize a man's body, but is there in

all your pharmacopœia a medicine that can convert an uncourageous man into a hero? Certainly! Every soldier is not naturally valiant. Many of them tremble as they hear the shock of war's alarm. If you want courage in the ranks, you must have chivalry in the chief. If the commander is a Cromwell, he will captain a troop of Ironsides, and the Cavaliers will go down before their resistless charge. One brave heart has often held and won the field. In one of the most perilous hours of the battle of Waterloo, Wellington rode on his war-charger along the whole front of battle, and the thin red line that had well-nigh wavered and broken roared out its cheer of welcome. Said one soldier to another, "I would rather see that old hooked nose of his than another battalion of infantry." What! you say, a hooked nose better than a battalion! Well, it all depends on whose face the nose adorns. That hooked nose grew upon the face of one of the finest generals in European armies; and as his war-worn troops saw him riding there they felt their hope revive, their courage was renewed, and they battled on through dust and heat, through din and smoke, until victory had crowned their arms. And Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, rides on his white charger too along the whole front of battle; and when our strength, grown feeble, seems as though it is no longer able to resist and to endure, over the din of the conflict rings out the voice of the King, saying, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the consummation of the age." And the courage with which we fight is heaven-born. The inspiration is divine. It is a spiritual

contagion induced by contact with Him who has never quailed and has never sustained defeat.

3. The third bell is a vibrant tenor, not very dissimilar in tone to the rich contralto. "Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed." But Joshua was afraid —desperately afraid. He was not afraid of God. He was afraid of himself. He dared not trust his own. He had come to the supreme crisis of his life, and as he confronted it, he felt that his strength was feebleness, his wisdom foolishness, and all his past achievements child's play in contrast with the tremendous task. What will you do for a man who so seriously mistrusts himself and is so desperately conscious of his human weakness? Bring the argument down a stage, for though trite, it is not less true. What do you do for your little child when you are teaching him to walk? You prop him up against the wall, and then, stepping back a pace, you stoop down, and stretching out your arms you say, "Come!" But does he come? Not he. There he stands with his shoulders squared against the wall, but his knees are wobbling under him, and he feels that if he dares to put one foot before the other he will tumble to a disastrous fall. Why is he so timorous? He is not afraid of his father. He is afraid of himself. He dare not trust his own. That is all that is wrong with him. But give him a finger, and he clasps it with a grip like steel, and then, although perhaps not very vigorously, he ventures, and so long as father does not leave go he feels utterly secure. "Be not afraid," says the great All-Father, and stretched out to you

is the finger of the hand that fashioned the stars; and if you are gripping that you need never be afraid.

"Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed." Is there any difference between being afraid and being dismayed? Oh, yes! It is the difference between twilight and dark. A child may be afraid of stumbling at noonday, but when the darkness has wrapped it round and it is conscious of a deep sense of isolation it is something more than afraid, it is dismayed. Have you never heard a cry resounding through all the house, past midnight? Have you never gone, on swift responsive feet, to that other room, and found a pathetic little figure huddled up under the bedclothes, with tear-drenched eyes, positively quivering with alarm? "Why, sonny! What in the world is the matter with you?"

"Oh, daddy, I am so frightened of the dark, and you have left me all alone."

"Well, never mind, I will kindle the lamp and make the darkness to be light round about you. Do not fear! father will not go away."

Does that seem an infantile illustration, somewhat too simple for your highly developed intelligence? Well, let it stay. I am quite content to disciple myself to that great English master who described himself as

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light—
> And with no language but a cry."

You may imagine yourselves to be grown-up men and women, quite able to fend for yourselves. God

knocked all that nonsense out of me thirty years ago when my life was trembling on the verge of tragedy; and since then I have known myself to be just one of God's great crying bairns. Out of my own experience of pain I testify to you that when the night was at its densest, and the darkness full of the spectral shapes, conjured up by my own deep doubts and fears, through the gloom I heard the voice of Him who hath loved me with more than a mother's love, saying, "Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed," and lo! in his radiant presence the darkness departed, and the shadows fled away.

4. The fourth bell is the bass; and its deep tone reverberates through all this gracious word. "For the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest." It was the assurance of that which made Joshua the lion-hearted, and wrapped his soul in the peace of a great content. When once a man is sure of that, he is sure of everything. And do you imagine that the promise was meant for Joshua's sole possession and enjoyment? I tell you, No! This is God's word to you and me, as much as ever it was to him; and the comfort of it we may appropriate as our very own in Christ Jesus. The promise is applicable to every variety of experience through which we may be called to pass. God's "whithersoever" covers the whole area of Time and stretches out to the widest circumference of Eternity. We too are pilgrims to a better country, and the perils of the wilderness are not all passed. There are mazy paths to tread, and we need a Guard and Guide. There are changes that

are sure to come. The tent in which we have tabernacled may have to be taken down. The camp in which we have sojourned and in which we have found such comfort and delight may have to be struck and the march resumed. We know not at what moment the pillar of cloud may lift and lead us on. But this we may always know, "The Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest." Doubt does not, cannot, enter here.

"But, Lord! there is a river of sorrow through which I must wade. Already its waters are at my feet, and the wind-whipped waves have dashed the spray into my face."

"Be not afraid! When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

"But, Lord, there are mountains of difficulty which I must climb, and their rocky summits are hidden in the clouds of grief."

"Be not afraid! I will make all my mountains a way, and thy pasture shall be in all the high places. There are no bare heights where the Shepherd leads his flock. When he putteth forth his sheep and goeth before them, the very granite is clothed with verdant grass, and the sun-scorched rocks become fountains with pools of water."

"But, Lord, there are foes to fight and fearsome beasts to contend with."

"Be not afraid! I will smite the adversary and the avenger before thy face, and thou shalt trample upon the lion and adder. Yea, the young lion and

the dragon thou shalt trample under feet, because I have set my love upon you."

"But, Lord, there is that last lone valley, hidden in the mist of tears, and wrapped in the shadow that men call death. They tell me that it narrows to a ledge so shallow that the most intimate souls cannot walk it two abreast; and as I think of its isolation, my heart grows chill with fear."

"Be not afraid! for I will go with thee all the way; and by that valley I will discover to you the path which leads out of the wilderness into all the perennial peace and plenty of the Promised Land. The darkness you see only veils the glory which now it would blind your eyes to behold; and on the other side is the light supernal, and the City that knows no sunset. There no inhabitant says, I am sick. Sorrow and death have been done away. Tears have been wiped from off all faces. Night is no more. In that City they have no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

You have listened to the distinctive note of those four bells. Now hear the perfect harmony of their fourfold chime. For at the last, the music just concentrates itself in this:

> "Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
> Jesus we know, and he is on the throne."

HALLELUJAH! JESUS IS ON THE THRONE!

IV

THE PROPHETIC OFFICE: ITS FUNCTION AND ITS FULFILLMENT

And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!—*Numbers* 11. 29.

THAT is the speech of a giant soul. It breathes the spirit of humility which is characteristic of essential greatness. The loftiest are always the lowliest in heart. It is only the mean man, conscious of the insecurity of his own claim to eminence, who needs to fence his petty dignity by arrogant self-assertion. The small mind is always the envious mind. The larger the mold in which the life has been fashioned, the less room there is for jealousy and suspicion. Magnanimity is the true patent of nobility. Whoever possesses it bears about with him the sign-manual of royalty, and whatever his station in life may be he demonstrates his kingliness of character and disposition.

What were the circumstances which called forth this speech of Moses? He was growing old, and the burden of office was becoming an intolerable load. The tears of the people had become his meat and drink day and night. Upon his shoulders lay the care of all the congregation, and he had asked for some relief from the enormous pressure. He had been divinely

directed to assemble seventy of the elders of Israel, and bring them to the tent of meeting, that they might be set apart as his fellow helpers in the giant task of administration. It was in every sense of the word an ordination service, full of solemnity and spiritual power. "And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease."

For some reason or another, two of the men did not accompany their fellows; they remained within the camp, but the Spirit rested upon them also, and was attested by the same signs. "And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun . . . answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them." He was scandalized at the irregularity of the proceedings. These men had not submitted themselves for ordination. They were therefore of the laity. They had not been officially admitted to the ministerial office. Wherefore should they be permitted to exercise its functions? To Joshua's mind it seemed like a gross infringement of the just prerogatives of his great leader, and bitterly he resented it on his behalf. But with a meekness born of a lifelong discipline in the school of God's grace Moses made answer: "Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them." Even thus early in the church's history he discerned the

truth that the Spirit bloweth where it listeth. His activities cannot be confined within any code of human regulations. The Spirit's dower is not the monopoly of any official caste; still less is it disposable by mere tactual relationship of man to man. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all . . . dividing to each man severally as he will."

That is a fact which constantly needs re-emphasis, because it is precisely that fact which is continually being obscured amid the unholy strife of mere ecclesiasticism. The clergy are always arrogating to themselves rights and privileges in which the laity are supposed to have no share. For purposes of convenience it is the will of God to have men set apart for the fulfillment of certain spiritual functions; but when these men seek to assert a monopoly of spiritual power, it is a violation of the liberty wherewith we all have been enfranchised. The spirit of the priest is always alien to human freedom, and within the confines of the Church of God it has wrought untold mischief and misery. We need continually to reassert the fact that all the Lord's people may be prophets. Pre-eminence in the kingdom of grace is conditioned only by purity of heart and Christliness of character. As we gather around the cross we meet on common ground and on equal terms before the one Lord and Master of us all; and the only eminence which exalts one man above another is the eminence

of moral excellence. As Dr. Joseph Parker puts it: "We are all God's clergy . . . and our priesthood has no standing but in our holiness. Not in our intellectual capacity, not in our technical training, not in our official status, but in the sanctification of the will and of the heart—the total sacrifice of the man to God."

The spirit of sacerdotalism has no place in Methodism; but it was all of the Lord's mercies that we escaped from its blighting thrall. When Thomas Maxfield, an unordained man, started, in Wesley's absence, to preach at the Old Foundery in Moorfields, Wesley hastened back to London to put a stop to it. He had been trained in the narrow school of clerical exclusiveness, and his punctilious soul recoiled from what seemed to him an unwarrantable invasion of holy orders. But his mother, to whom Methodism owes more than it can accurately measure, restrained him from his purpose. Looking attentively at her son, she said, "John . . . take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as truly called of God to preach as you are." And when Wesley came to examine the fruits of that unofficial ministry, he was constrained to say, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." It is in virtue of that event that every man in Methodism is afforded a sphere of opportunity according to the measure of his ability and devotion. And that sphere must be extended rather than contracted; but its extension is contingent upon our spiritual fitness to discharge the high vocation whereunto we have been called.

Moses was keen-sighted enough to see that the cause for which he had lived and labored could only be carried to ultimate victory through the increase and perpetuation of Spirit-filled men; and that is true of every project which has for its aim the extension of the kingdom of God. The true test of the prophet is his power to inspire others with the same spirit with which he himself has been imbued, and to win them to the cause which he has espoused. The dignity of the prophetic office is most securely established when it is most broadly based. It is not a sinecure for a chosen few; it is a crusade in which all may join; and our fitness to occupy it and fulfill it is demonstrated by our loyalty to the stern ideals of duty, the clarity of our spiritual vision, the passion of our patriotism, the fervor of our prayers, and the influence for righteousness which we exert upon the community of which we form a part. Surely, the prayer of Moses is a prayer for every period of the church's history. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them."

What, then, is the function of the prophet, and what are the qualifications which fit a man for this sacred ministry? First and foremost, let us rid our minds of the erroneous idea that a prophet is one who possesses mystic power to discern the secrets of the unborn to-morrow, and that any one who does not possess that faculty is thereby disqualified and debarred from the prophetic office. That is the commonly accepted signification of the term, but it is based

on a misconception, and is at variance with the root-meaning of the word. In its native Greek "prophet" does not mean "one who speaks before," but "one who speaks for or on behalf of another." Not to foretell, but to forthtell; in other words, to testify, is the main function of the prophet. Sir George Adam Smith asserts: "The prophet is the inspired person who is in communication with the Deity, and who speaks directly for the Deity. . . . The sharer of God's counsels, he becomes the bearer and preacher of God's Word. Prediction of the future is only a part, and often a subordinate and accidental part of an office, the full function of which is to declare the character and will of God. . . . And he does this, not because the word . . . has been committed to him by itself, and as if he were only its mechanical vehicle, but because he has come under the overwhelming conviction of God's presence, . . . a conviction often so strong that God's word breaks through him, and by his lips God speaks in the first person to the people."

If that interpretation be correct—and I know of nothing to disprove it—then every redeemed life may be made radiant by God's indwelling, and every pure tongue may testify to the reality and preciousness of things unseen. Nearness to God and free access to his Spirit are conditions which every forgiven man can fulfill. The prayer of Moses, therefore, does not constitute an unattainable ideal. It is capable of being fully realized. All the Lord's people may be prophets, if they will. We are not straitened in God; we are straitened in our own selves. If we are excluded

from the prophetic office, it is because we are living beneath our privileges. Our limitations are a self-inflicted penalty.

1. We may all be prophets in our loyalty to the stern ideals of duty. I said just now that the vocation of the prophet was not a sinecure, but a crusade. Its weapon is the sword of truth, its ensign the banner of righteousness. Whoever enlists beneath that banner must be prepared for opposition. To range yourself upon the side of God is to earn the world's hostility, derision, and disdain. Never to a people came there a true prophet who was void of persecution. Every one of them wore the badge of the world's malignant hate. Every one of them was despised and rejected of men. They "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy)." And if we would join the goodly fellowship of the prophets, these are the conditions of entering the ranks of the Church's heroes. There are no cheaper terms to which we can subscribe. The world's hate may be less virulent in its modes of manifestation; but it is still there, and our loyalty to Christ will rouse it. Our devotion to God will deserve it, and if we fail to win it, we shall miss the supreme certificate of merit. To be on good terms with the world is to be at enmity with God. To be at peace with the adversary is to be recreant to the

King. In such a world as this you can only be comfortable by violating principle and compromising conscience. The path of duty, if you will follow it, will lead you to the battlefield where right contends with wrong, and to shirk that conflict is to forfeit the honor and to miss the garland of victory.

2. We may all be prophets in the clarity of our spiritual vision. They called the prophets seers; and that not merely because to some of them it was given to see the dawning of a far-off light upon the horizon of the future, but because of their quick perception of the inwardness of things present. Search the prophetic utterances, and you will find that they concern themselves chiefly with the events of the immediate moment; the intrigues of the court, the conspiracies of the council, the voluptuousness of the rich, the grinding misery of the poor. The whole trend of social, political, and religious life was the subject-matter with which the prophets dealt; and their references to the future are frequently nothing more than justifiable inferences drawn from the facts immediately before their eyes. The difference between the politician and the prophet lay in this, that the former judged things from the surface, the latter from the center. The politician took the line of least resistance, and measured events by the standards of a corrupt diplomacy. The prophet pursued the path of principle, and estimated all things by the standard of eternal righteousness. The one looked at life through the eyes of men, the other saw the affairs of earth through the eyes of God. The prophets were seers,

quick to detect the peril, instant to expose the wrong, ready, without respect of persons, to denounce the evildoers, and to pronounce upon them God's righteous doom.

Is there no necessity for the continuance of the prophetic office in the exercise of this function of moral discernment and spiritual discipline? Has the government of the world so far emerged from barbarism that we can afford to dispense with the watchers upon the ramparts of our civilization? Open your eyes to the facts which are in evidence all around you, and you will see that the age-long scandals, against which Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea inveighed, are still with us. And are we to be like dumb dogs in the presence of manifest wrong, and calmly acquiesce in the devil's triumph? I tell you no! There is still necessity for men of purpose, loyal to truth, fearing naught beside, to search and see, and pronounce judgment upon the evil which they cannot fail to find. As we walk up and down our cities, and go to and fro in our land, we must get the divine point of view, and weigh every relationship of life in the balances of the sanctuary. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets," and brought to the study of our social problems that clear-eyed vision which sees things in their true perspective. Too many of us suffer from color-blindness, and call black white. Too many of us are warped by prejudice, and pronounce evil to be good. We fail to make those moral distinctions between things that differ as light from darkness, and night from noon. If we were not so steeped

in apathy, so drugged by selfish sloth, many of the iniquities which afflict our land and nation would crumble into ruin, and be thrust down into their own proper hell, within the lifetime of this generation. It is because there is no vision that the people perish.

3. We may all be prophets in the passion of our patriotism. Patriotism is a word which has been debased, and it needs to be redeemed. Doctor Johnson said that patriotism was the last refuge of the scoundrel. That may be an extravagant expression which some may doubt and others may deny. But it cannot be denied that patriotism has been made the cloak of every form of villainy and oppression. There is a vulgar form of patriotism which is much in vogue to-day, which takes for its motto, "Our country, right or wrong." I need scarcely say that such a spirit is not inspired from above, but from beneath. The patriotism of the prophets was the antithesis of that. Its sacred flame was kindled by no devil's torch, but by a live coal from off God's altar. Their love of the fatherland was an enthusiasm which never waxed faint or dim. There was not a man of them who would not have shed his blood for the defense of Jerusalem and the honor of Judæa. Even when they were compelled to denounce upon their land the doom of awful desolation, their tears fell hissing in the fire of their deep indignation. The truest patriots were not the braggarts who jeered and scoffed above their wine-cups while the engines of destruction thundered at the gates. The truest patriots were the prophets who sought to quicken the civic conscience, to awaken

the national spirit, if haply by penitence and prayer they might avert the catastrophe which, sooner or later, overtakes every nation that forgets its God.

Patriotism is a cheap sentiment in England to-day. The name is often boasted by men who have done little to deserve it; and frequently it is denied to those whose whole life has been devoted to the best interests of the commonwealth. We may love old England none the less passionately because we carry within us a conscience for our country's sins. We may best serve the land we love by setting ourselves resolutely to the task of extirpating those giant lusts which are sapping the very foundations of our nation's greatness, and staining the pride of all its glory. Unless our patriotism is inspired by our religion, it is not worth possessing. Unless we can lay it on the altar as a pure sacrifice to God, it is a menace to the community and a crime against the State.

4. We may all be prophets in the fervor of our prayers. We must earn our title to prophesy by the agony of intercession. There are few things more costly to acquire than the grace of supplication. The fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous man is not a morbid sighing, but a sweat of blood. It is not merely a movement of the lips, it is an emotion of the heart. Prayer is the very elixir of the soul, and it cannot be poured out without pain and sacrifice. The prophets of the race have always had their Gethsemane, even where they have escaped the crowning tragedy of Calvary. None were exempt from deep spiritual travail. And your life and mine can never

be made ministrant to the saving of the souls of men unless we are content to tread the path which all the great intercessors trod—that path which was bedewed with the strange sorrow of the Lamb. If you think that prayer is easy, it is because you have never prayed. If prayer to you is only a pastime, it is because you have never passed within the veil, where the true priest, prostrate before the mercy-seat, makes intercession for men that they may live and not die. In that Holy of holies men spend their strength, as it is never spent either in business or in battle. True prayer is prodigal of spiritual energy. It leaves the intercessor with blanched face and trembling form, vanquished but victorious, exhausted but triumphant. Supplication of that sort is never easy. The only kind of prayer that counts—costs. Only as we share the travail of the Saviour's soul can we help Christ save the world.

5. Finally, we may all be prophets in the influence for righteousness which we exert upon the community of which we form a part. The prophets were preachers of no ordinary power, because the message upon their lips was reinforced by the rigor of their lives. Their character always corresponded to their creed. Their testimony for God was corroborated by the witness of their whole moral manhood. Men might turn deaf ears to the truths they uttered, but they could not blind their eyes to the exhibition of their personal purity. And in the final analysis it is character that tells. Abstract truth may be controverted and denied; but a skeptic world is compelled

to give homage to the embodied fact of holiness. Sanctity of heart and life is the characteristic of the conquering Church. Whatever we can add to that is an effective addition to those spiritual forces by which Christ proposes to subdue the world. "Ye are the salt of the earth." We purify by being pure. Our perfection is humanity's redemption. Ten righteous men could have saved Sodom and Gomorrah from an awful doom; and our own cities are being saved from calamities akin to that which overwhelmed the cities of the plain, because of the righteous men within them, who cease not day nor night from making intercession for the guilty. Shall we not therefore seek to become agencies of social health, conserving the body politic from moral rottenness? Shall we not pour the antiseptic influences of personal righteousness upon the putridities of a corrupt society? Who can tell how vast a reformation could be achieved if only we were faithful to the ministry to which Christ has called us? If ten righteous men could have averted the catastrophe of Sodom, surely ten thousand pure souls, toiling without tiring, praying without ceasing, could achieve the salvation of the city, and make it like unto a paradise of God.

"Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"

V

THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.— *Isaiah* 66. 13.

It is to Jesus that the world owes the sublime idea of the Fatherhood of God. That great unveiling of the essential nature of the Deity was possible only to One who had dwelt from everlasting in the bosom of the Father. That idea dawned upon the world with all the splendor of a sunrise, and in the light thereof men are climbing steadily out of the pit of their original barbarism toward the Eternal Light, which is the Eternal Love. That idea unfolds a vision of the heart of God which grows more vivid as the centuries proceed; but it will find its glorious consummation only in the wealthy hospitality of the Father's house. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the mind of a man to imagine the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

Isaiah's figure has also a peculiar fascination. To him there was vouchsafed no revelation of the final fact concerning God. Nowhere does he address him as "Our Father," or describe him as sustaining that relationship to individual souls; but again and again he employs an image which is ever nearest to his heart and speaks of him as exercising the attributes of motherhood. The people are represented as God's

bairns, suckled and cradled in the lap of their mother. And that idea is very precious. But here, an even yet finer thought finds tender and beautiful expression; for the prophet is not thinking of an infant of days; he is thinking of a grown man emerging from some grim crisis, with wounds and weariness upon him, and turning instinctively toward home to be healed and comforted of his mother. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And ye shall see it, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the tender grass."

There is no necessity to deal with the historical associations of the text. The modern application is too obvious and urgent. All through the ages men have felt their need of the motherhood of God. The might of the Creator separates him from us by the distance of infinity. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by name; by the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power, not one is lacking." Like a flock of obedient sheep the constellations follow Him in their nightly march across the heavens. By His fiat they were fashioned, and by His strength they are sustained in the vast realms of space. Such majestic might awakes our wonder and evokes our adoration, but makes no appeal to our affection. We cannot love omnipotence. It affrights and overwhelms our minds. Who has not known that consciousness of awe which filled the soul of Israel's ancient singer, as, turning from his con-

templation of the star-lit skies, he said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" Poor, feeble, futile, fleeting phantom—man is dwarfed into insignificance by the might of the Creator, and all his pretensions are obliterated by the majesty of the spheres.

If you think of God in his august offices of Lawgiver and Judge, the gap is not appreciably lessened. Between the earthly subject and the heavenly King there is a great gulf fixed. The seraphim confess it, as with veiled faces they cry one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is filled with his glory!" Before that ever-blazing throne there is but one posture for men of unclean lips. It is down in the dust, with anguished soul confessing, "Woe is me! for I am undone!" Which of us can contemplate the Great Assize without a sense of foreboding fear? Between the criminal at the bar and the Judge upon the bench there can be no commerce except in terms and tones of doom. If this were all, we might well despair. We need another relationship to redeem our life from fear. David was searching for the missing attribute of tenderness, when he tuned his harp to sing, "The Lord is my Shepherd." One day he almost stumbled upon the ultimate truth, when he said, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." But it was Jesus, great David's greater Son, who authoritatively supplied the lack. It marked a new epoch in the old world's life when Christ gathered those

fishermen of Galilee about him and taught them that God's real name was Father, that the divine Fatherhood was a fact and not a simile, and that his nature and his new name for ever correspond. A section of the church, in a vain endeavor to improve upon the gospel of Christ, has exalted the Virgin Mary to deific rank, in order to incorporate into the Godhead those characteristic feminine qualities which are the supreme charm of womanhood. There is no need, as there is absolutely no justification, for so false a dogma. There is more than a mother's love in the great Father's heart. His gentleness and mercy, his patience and pity, are the wellspring from which the river of our salvation took its rise. He is our Father and our Mother, as well as our Creator and King and Judge. The masculine virility of the Father's strong defense is re-enforced by a love more mighty than ever moved in a mother's compassionate breast. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." That is the oracle of God, and it reveals the miracle of his passion to redeem.

1. So let us think of the varied ministry of motherhood, that ministry by which our earliest life was nourished and sustained. Let us lift the highest associations of the word up into the divine that we may catch a clearer vision of all that God is, and all that he desires to be to us and to the world. There is no word in human speech more redolent of compassion than that word "mother." A mother's love has become the synonym of an invariable constancy. It is the unfailing and unchanging asset of humanity. But it

was born out of pain. Its root is sorrow, though its fruit is joy. If a mother's love is more tender than a father's, it is because she has known more of weariness and travail than he. It was through the anguish of her body that the bairns were born, and it is through the exaltation of her spirit that they learn the supreme lessons of self-sacrifice and service. If she holds first place in the affections of her children, she holds it by right of purchase; and you must estimate its cost in terms of pain if you would know the full value of the purchase price. Every mother in the world has gone down to the very gates of the grave to bring back from thence the fair young life she nourishes nearest to her heart.

We were born into the world by the will of the Father. He is the Creator of every living thing; but in the act of creation God did something for us which cost him nothing. There was only the forth-putting of majestic energy. He spake and it was done. But when we are born again we are regenerated through the anguish of the Eternal Spirit. Our Mother-God travailed in birth for us that we might be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and love. He went down to the gates of death and through them, that we might possess the life which is life indeed. It was by processes of pain, in which we had no part, that we received power to become the children of God. The Progenitor of our lives, who formed us of clay and made us men, demands our homage and receives the reverence due; but the Regenerator of our souls who by His Spirit

quickened us into newness of life receives by right the most ardent affection of our hearts.

> "Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all."

2. Then think of the ministry of motherhood in sickness. When the brow is fevered and the body racked with pain, it is the mother's mystic touch that has cooling, healing power. A father is a very useful person to have about the house when the boys are wanting to build a rabbit-hutch, or to repair a punctured tire; but when they have punctured themselves, or disease has laid them low, it is the maternal hand that must bind their wounds and smooth their pillows, and woo and win them back to health and strength again. It is the mother who moves like an angel of God in the darkened chamber of sickness; and when all the world is still, and every other member of the household is wrapped in sleep, she still keepeth vigil, with ear alert to the slightest whimper of distress. And in the spiritual realm that is precisely the function fulfilled by our Mother-God. To whom can we go when our lives are riven by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, when our hearts are aching, bruised and battered beneath the cruelest assaults of life? Who is it that notes with pitying eye our unspeakable grief when calamity has come upon us, and our utterance is choked by the sobs which cannot be suppressed? But when left lonely, by bereavement and bitter loss, we fling ourselves forlornly upon a couch made desolate by death, blessed be God, we are

neither left nor forsaken. "He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." In the hour of our direst necessity he comes to us—comes on the wings of the wind, and to feel God's kiss upon the fevered spirit is to be garrisoned by the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

3. Then think of a mother's ministry in the hour of danger. Solomon says that "Love is strong as death." Had he been speaking of mother-love he might have used the comparative rather than the positive, and said that love was stronger than death. He does redeem the weakness of his phrase by adding "The coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." How true that is! There is no river long enough, or ocean deep enough, to destroy a mother's love. Many a woman crossed to France, daring mine and submarine, and all the possible horrors of shipwreck, that she might see her dying lad and comfort his passing soul with the sweetest balm which the human spirit can distill.

Zangwill, in his *Ghetto Tragedies,* has an inimitable chapter entitled "The Sabbath Breaker." The scene opens in one of the Polish provinces. Late in the afternoon of Friday a Hebrew mother receives a letter from her son, who lives in a town some five and thirty miles away, and in it he says that cholera has broken out in the district. Many of his neighbors have died, and he is not feeling very well himself, but hopes to be better upon the morrow. With a woman's

swift intuition she leaps to the conclusion that the life she loves is in imminent and deadly peril, and instantly resolves to go to him. But what can she do? The Sabbath has just set in. She cannot hire a conveyance or even purchase food. Her religion forbids so long a journey. So, deeming pedestrianism the lesser sin against the law, she determines to walk. Mile after mile she pursues the path through the forest. Her dress, her face, her fingers are torn by the briars and the thorns which beset the way. In the distance she hears the baying of the timber wolf; but what cares she? From her anxious heart there rises the cry: "I am coming to thee, my lamb, the little mother is on the way. I shall see thee, I shall see thee alive." And so all night she tramps the long monotonous miles, until the darkness turns to dawn. With the first ray of light she plucks the letter out of her bosom and reads again its evil tidings. Her feet are bleeding, she is famished by long fasting, her strength is almost spent, and she is yet some distance from the goal. Refreshed by a draught of water, she staggers forward, ever forward, crying, "I am coming to thee, my lamb, the little mother is on the way." And so all day, under a blistering Eastern sun, along the dusty road, she presses onward, until in the eventide she comes within sight of the dwelling and hears from afar the sound of lamentation—the Jewish dirge for the dead—and knows, alas! that she has come too late. . . . Then the scene changes. A woman of alien race lies sick unto death in a Poplar workhouse. With her wasted fingers she is fumbling in her night-dress,

and at last plucks out from between her withered breasts a letter, yellowed with age, and blistered by tears. It is the letter she received on that fateful and far-off day. She strives to read the closely written script, but her old eyes refuse their office. The film of death has already glazed her sight; but with the last flicker of vital energy she lifts her head from the pillow and cries with her latest breath: "I am coming to thee, my lamb; the little mother is on the way. I shall see thee, I shall see thee alive."

What would have been the use of warning that mother against the possibility of infection? When does a mother ever think of herself? Cholera, bubonic plague, small-pox, diphtheria,—none of these things have power to deflect her from her ministry of compassion. The most revolting forms of sickness cannot inspire her heart with personal fear or selfish dread. She thinks only of the patient, and would count her life well lost if only the child were saved. And that is how our Mother-God deals with his bairns too. He comes to us when our spirits have been smitten with sin's most fell disease, and, thank God, he never comes too late. When he hastens to our rescue he does not need to walk, with weary steps and slow. He maketh the clouds his chariot and rideth on the wings of the storm. Sin may have infected us, body and soul, with the most loathsome forms of leprosy, until everybody else shrinks from us in disgust and loathing; but he never shrinks. Others may despair of our healing, and we may even lose hope of ourselves, but he never despairs. All the recu-

perative powers of God-head he brings with him for our remedial treatment; and his touch hath still its ancient power, no word from him can fruitless fall.

> "Life from the dead is in that word,
> 'Tis immortality."

4. Finally, think of a mother's ministry in the hour of deep disgrace. The lad has lapsed from the paths of virtue; the glory of the dawn has given place to black ignominy and disaster; the hope of the family has become a wastrel, tarnishing an honored name and bringing misery upon a happy home. Under such circumstances, the father, with masculine austerity, may lock the door and vow, in his righteous indignation, that the scapegrace shall cross his threshold nevermore. But the mother will keep the candle lighted in the window and the door upon the latch. Her lips still move in prayer for the wanderer, and quiver with a hope she hardly dares to express.

Have you never noted in the gospel that pregnant phrase, "And there stood by the cross his mother"? If Joseph had lived, I doubt if he would have been there. Mary's other sons were absent; and Peter and James, and all the others, except John, who had more of the woman in his makeup than all the rest of them put together. But Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there, sharing his shame. And, mark you, it was no ordinary shame, but deep, black, indelible disgrace. She saw her Son dying the death of a common criminal, hounded by man's fierce hate to the awful end of an outcast. Round her surged the wild fanatical

mob, howling their blasphemous execrations and hurling their spite in the face of the Crucified. But Mary was with him in the shadows, sharing his awful shame; and if you owe her no other debt of gratitude, remember this, that she did not forsake him, though all others failed and fled. If I may gauge her thought as she stood at the gallows foot, by the instincts which lived and moved in my own mother's heart, I am certain of this, that she would cheerfully have endured the agony of crucifixion, and died for him, if she could. The nails that pierced his hands and feet, and the spear that searched his broken heart, went like a sword through her own soul. Her love endured the taunts and jeers of the mocking crowd, the derision and heartlessness of the soldiers; her love survived the darkness of the sun's eclipse and the rending of the Temple veil, and triumphed—triumphed at the very gates of hell! In your revolt from Mariolatry do not forget that in the blackest hour that ever darkened upon the world there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother; and the dead body of your Lord was doubtless wrapped in the linen cloths by the toil-worn hands of that lowly peasant woman, whom God made the human agent of the most wondrous birth in history.

You have the idea I am laboring to express in its quintessence there. And that is what God is, and waits to be, to every one of us. If in the wide universe there is any love "passing the love of women," it is the love which lives and moves in the heart of our Mother-God. He shares our shame, and carries upon his own great heart the crushing burden of our

sin. Into the night of our apostasy he comes to inspire a living hope in our dead hearts by the light of his glorious face. He stands by us, even when we are clad in the somber rags of our deserved disgrace, and refuses to give us up even when we have utterly despaired of ourselves.

In Christ's parable of the prodigal, only a part of the story is told. In that inimitable picture we see the father, forsaken by the son, still abiding in his ancestral hall. It may be with a burdened heart; and oft-times his wistful gaze is lifted to the hills to see if he can discern upon the skyline the figure of the penitent. But still he stays; and it is not until his tear-dimmed eyes have actually seen the returning wanderer that he casts aside his paternal dignity and runs to meet him on his way. But in the actual history of redemption, of which that pearl of parables is only an imperfect illustration, the father did not abide at home until the broken-hearted ragamuffin found sense enough to retrace his steps. The mother-instinct in the heart of God prompted the quest of the lost child. He went out himself into the far country, down into the lowlands of desire and dissipation, down into the dark valleys of disgust and secret loathing, down to the swine-troughs, where deep weariness and sated lust made human life a hell; and in that awful limbo, the suburb of the City of Dreadful Night, he found and redeemed his long-lost child. That element is omitted from the parable, because Christ had not yet suffered, and the meaning of the Cross was obscured even from the keenest

eyes; but we know it, know it now. Ah yes! we know it now. Every Christmas we celebrate his coming to visit us in great humility; and when we eat of that bread and drink of that cup, we do show forth the Lord's death, until he shall come again in his glorious majesty.

When I was a first year's man at Richmond College, and went with two dozen other students to Professor Richardson, the finest exponent of the art of elocution I have ever known, he put us up, man after man, to read a passage from the Scriptures, that he might detect, and afterward correct, our faults of enunciation and expression. When I was called to the lectern I turned to the fifty-third chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, and began to read, as I suppose any other raw country lad would have read, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

"Stop! stop!" cried the professor. "If you do these things in the green tree, what will you do in the dry?"

I looked at him in amazement. I had pronounced no word awry, I had given full value to the comma and semi-colon. What had I done to deserve such a storm of rebuke?

Then, in kindlier tones, he said: "My lad, you will never read that chapter as it ought to be read until you put your mother into it. Listen to me."

And then in a tone that was awed into a whisper he began to recite: "'She was wounded for my transgressions. She was bruised for my iniquities: the

chastisement of my peace was upon her; and with her stripes I was healed.' Do you see it now?" he asked.

Ah, yes! I saw it then; saw what I had never seen in all my life before. It was not so much a criticism of my faulty elocution, as an exposition of the sublimest bit of poetry in literature achieved by the simple change of a pronoun, and the marvelous modulation of a human voice. I saw that day the vision of an old gray head, bowed beneath a crown of thorns upon an accursed tree. I looked up into the face which was marred more than any man's. A livid bruise was darkening upon the cheek where a bully's hand had smitten a felon blow; a soldier's filthy spittle was still wet upon the brow; blood-drops were oozing from the punctured wounds and were slowly trickling down. It was my mother's face which had been thus marred and so shamefully maltreated. The hands transfixed upon that awful cross were the hands that had swaddled and cradled me. Those feet so pierced and torn had been swift on errands of mercy to serve my helplessness and need. That heart through which that Roman spear had thrust its ruthless way was the heart that had loved me best in the world. And she was wounded for my transgressions, she was bruised for my iniquities, the cloud of my guilt hid from her dying eyes the vision of the Father's face, and beneath the burden of my sin and shame her heart had broken in its agony. I never knew what a detestable, dastardly, damnable thing sin was till I saw it had slain my mother. Sin became to me, thenceforth, the ele-

mental horror of life, no longer to be tolerated, still less to be rolled beneath the tongue as a sweet morsel. Sin, so sinister in its essential sinfulness, and so tragic in its tremendous sequences, was fit only for the scorching flames of hell. Do you say that my vision was farfetched and fantastic? That is because you never knew my mother. She would have consented to be crucified, dead and buried for any one of her bairns. She would have gone a willing exile out into the endless night, if only she could have seen us safely through the gates into the City. Damnation for her would have been shorn of half its ghastly terrors if only by her damnation she could have secured our souls' salvation. And that is what your Mother-God actually did for you, when he who knew no sin was made to be sin on your behalf. The poignancy of the cross we shall never fully understand. There are mysteries of atonement which no mortal mind can fathom; but through the darkness which shrouds the dying Son of God there comes a cry of dereliction, and that heart-sob of the Saviour tells us more than anything beside how bitter was the load he bore when he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. For our sakes he endured the tortures of the damned, faced the night of God-forsakenness, and drank to the bitter dregs the cup of our curse and condemnation. Theologians may discuss the meaning of a phrase set forth in an ancient creed, "He descended into hell." Explain that as you will, and change the terminology as you may, the fact remains that what we call hell closed about him, stifling his breath and breaking his heart,

when the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all. Willingly he accepted that bondage that we might be made free indeed. Joyously he endured that awful night that we might become the children of the day. Sublime was the sorrow of the Lamb which purchased for us the joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. Therefore, we sing with joyous acclamation—

"Thou art the King of glory: O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son: of the Father.
When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man:
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death:
Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

VI

CITIZENS OF ETERNITY

He hath made every thing beautiful in its time: also he hath set the world in their heart.—*Ecclesiastes* 3. 11.

The Hebrew word here rendered "world" denotes indefinite duration. The revisers have placed an alternative reading in the margin, and if we incorporate that into the text, we shall begin to see more clearly the poetic balance of the author's argument. "He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also he hath set eternity in the hearts of all men." That slight emendation affords a most effective contrast. Time and Eternity are the antithetical terms upon which the passage hinges and turns. The earlier portion of the chapter depicts the changes which are incident to mortal life, the flood and ebb of every human passion, the variety of experience as the seasons wax and wane. In the nature of things these are transient, ephemeral, and doomed to disappear. But in the midst of Time's inevitable flux there are spiritual principles, permanent in their nature, enduring in their sequences, which live on and on, when every other form of good has withered and decayed. This, then, is the granite rock of reality which rears its head above the shifting sands of mere illusion. The billows of adversity cannot change its contour. The frigid glacier of death cannot diminish its massive strength.

"He hath set eternity in the hearts of all men"; and by that divine implanting man may rise superior to all the vicissitudes of life and triumph over the grave which is already gaping at his feet.

Judged superficially, our life is even as a vapor, a shadow which vanisheth away. We appear, and we disappear: we are, and we are not; and the space between the two events is pathetically brief. We are plunged in pursuits and immersed in occupations which apparently lead no-whither. We are like men chasing unsubstantial phantoms, which forever elude our eager grasp. But behind all this, and deeper, and forever enduring, there are potencies of love and longing, of faith and vision, which God planted and which God alone can satisfy. As one old preacher used to phrase it, "Man has a body, but he is a soul." And by our bodies we are the tenants of Time; but by our souls we are the citizens of Eternity.

Now, supposing we were only the tenants of Time, how fleeting our life, how baseless our hopes, how futile our efforts would be. If birth and death, planting and plucking, getting and losing, covered all the facts and constituted the whole record of existence, then, in the wide range of all created things, human life would be the most miserable fiasco, and man the most pitiful fugitive under the sun. If that process ended in itself a man might as well be nothing and do nothing; for those opposite processes cancel one another, and when all their little round is run their net result is nothing—nothing save a little handful of dust which the merest breath of wind might blow

away that it be found no more forever. If that were the sum total of life's equation, then would the idler be justified in his indolence, and the spendthrift prodigal would be the wisest philosopher of all. "What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth"—if all that he builds, with such lavish care, is to be at last pulled down, and not one stone left upon another?

It is the function of religion to answer that interrogation; and it answers it in this wise: Life is not a matter of appearances. The true interpretation of life penetrates beyond all outward semblances to the hidden man of the heart. All our pursuits and purposes, our hopes and aspirations, are merely the scaffolding which conceals, and yet aids, the erection of the permanent structure. We are not sent into the world to enjoy a holiday excursion, to carve a colossal fortune, or to achieve a perishable renown. We are here to build a character under the discipline of Time, and with that as our sole asset we are to enter the vast Eternity, which is the lifetime of God. Everything else is subsidiary to that, and if we fail at that point, we fail all along the line, and there is mockery on earth and laughter in the lowest pit of hell. A man may build his multimillions until he piles a pyramid of gold, or he may climb the giddiest heights of social success until men bow in his presence, as in the presence of a king; but if his wealth is not re-enforced by moral worth, if beyond his fame there is putridity in his purpose and corruption in his soul, his most widely acclaimed achievement is only the ghastly

monument of an irretrievable disaster. Call no man a failure whose character has been conformed to the image of Christ. He may be a pauper, but he is in possession of the only riches which can survive the final conflagration. It was Paul the penniless, prisoner of Christ at Rome, dwelling within walking distance of a headsman's block, who could confront the last ordeal of Time with this triumph-song upon his lips, "What though the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved; I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The soul that holds such title-deeds can never be impoverished or dispossessed.

The fundamental fallacy which vitiates the logic of so many human lives is enshrined in the false philosophy which regards this life as all, and cultivates no vision of a great Beyond. There are multitudes of men and women who are merely the citizens of Time. All their activities are devoted to its service. All their vision is bounded by the narrow range of its horizon. They were fashioned by God's fingers, animated by his Spirit's breath, redeemed by the anguish of his eternal Son; but stark materialism, like an inundating tide, has quenched within them the spark of the divine. Some years ago, in the Royal Academy, there was a picture of the ancient Circe. In vivid colors the artist had portrayed the goddess, seated in the cool green depths of the forest. She could play entrancing music, and, as she played, men flocked to listen, but as they listened she cast upon them subtle spells, and by her wizardry she turned them into

swine. Oh! it was pitiful to see the human expression in the narrow eyes of those unclean beasts. There they were, wallowing in the slime, rooting for acorns and beech-mast amid the fallen leaves, and within those foul, revolting carcasses were imprisoned immortal spirits, meant to be the companions of God's fair angels; but Circe, by her enchantments, had changed them into creatures, animal in instinct, desire and quest. Only a myth! But has it no corresponding reality in the life of the world to-day? Do you think those old Greeks wasted their time in fashioning legends which were wholly lies? The myths of ancient Greece and Rome are pagan parables, and each of them has a hidden spiritual significance, if you will only search and see. Have you never met a man on the street whose face has aroused within you a certain nausea of disgust? You said his features were porcine. What did you mean? It was not because he failed to correspond to some classic model of manly beauty that you shrank from him with such loathing. Gluttony had left its mark upon his countenance. Lust leered at you through the drink-drenched eyes. The body was surfeited; but the soul was starved. Materialism in its most vulgar and repulsive form had debauched and debased the noblest work of God.

Why is it that dissatisfaction is so rife around us? What is the secret of the world's unrest? Men have tried to satisfy themselves with things—things garnished with gold and decked with silver. They have arrayed themselves in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day, and they have said to their

soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry!" Wealth, fame, pleasure, profit—these are the shrines at which they worship, as though a soul could feed upon such ashes, and live with a lie in its right hand. Avarice and ambition, license and lust, cannot satisfy the ineradicable hunger of the human spirit. Amid all the tawdry decoration of the body, the soul sits shivering in the wretched rags of want. Amid all the gluttony and feasting of the most regally furnished banquet, the soul, like an unquiet ghost, cries out, "I thirst." There can be no true festival within until the spirit's needs have been supplied. Only the bread from the Father's table can appease its famine. Only a draught from the river of the water of life can assuage its drought. Saint Augustine spoke the essential truth when he said, "Lord, thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee." Side by side with that great affirmation I will place a passage from John Ruskin, "Better to be a pagan, suckled on some creed outworn, than to stand by the Sea of Life, and see no God walking upon its waves, and no heavenly home upon its vast horizon."

Where, then, shall we discover the final proof that God hath set eternity in the hearts of all men? What is that characteristic attribute of humanity which sets man in a category apart from any other creature God has made? You answer, "It is my love, for love is the greatest thing in the world." Yes! it may be, but you hold no monopoly of love. That is a faculty

shared in some measure by the beasts of the field. Even a tiger in the jungle will defend its offspring and serve its helplessness with a diligence and devotion which have in them a quality almost divine. Not many months ago a party of schoolboys, picnicking on a Yorkshire moor, in sheer wanton mischief set the heather alight. Mile after mile the conflagration raged across the moorside, and none seemed able to stay its devastating march. Crouching in the heather was a mother-grouse, with a dozen chicks under her wing. They were her chicks. True, they were only hatched out the day before yesterday; but they were her chicks, and she felt the bond which bound her to her callow brood. She saw the quick darting tongues of flame, and the billows of smoke which darkened the sun at noon-day: and she knew that it meant imminent and deadly peril. God had gifted her with the power of flight. She might have risen upon her strong pinions and put half the county between her and the destroyer; but she thought of her twelve chicks, and the mother-instinct in her brooding heart refused the base expedient of desertion. With her frail wings she strove to protect her brood from the on-coming peril; and the fire marched on, and over her—and there on the moorland was a little blackened heap, and under it a dozen chicks, choked in the all-devouring flame. You call that instinct. Call it what you like. I know what it was, and whence it came. You call it instinct, but I prefer to dignify it by another and a nobler name. Love moved her to die. It was an act of utter sacrifice, and the motive

which prompted such self-abnegation came originally out of the heart of the all-creating Christ.

Men talk contemptuously of the courage of a rabbit, but even a rabbit can be heroic, when the need arises. One day, a friend of mine witnessed a drama in the fields which, for sheer chivalry, puts many a knightly deed to shame. A rabbit was feeding in a lush meadow, with four or five animated balls of fur gambolling beside her. Suddenly the old doe stopped feeding, pricked her ears, and fixed her gaze upon a lithe and sinuous creature clad in sable and white. It was a weasel scouting for his supper, and he was crawling upon his belly through the grass, with most sinister intent. He was her natural foe, and under normal circumstances she would have fled from him in terror. Once his fangs were fastened in her throat, death would be her inevitable doom. But careless of consequences to herself, with the courage of a terrier dog she leaped upon the base intruder, drove him back into his lair, leaped the low stone wall to see if he had come out upon the other side, and leaped back again in a perfect frenzy of indignation. With her hind feet she stamped upon the ground, as much as to say, "You foul ferocity, you sly, slinking, murderous beast, if you dare to show your ugly face in the presence of my family again, I will dash you to pieces." That was not an act of mere bravado. Love gave her courage for the unequal combat. In the defense of her progeny she was content to battle and, if needs be, to die. Love has no finer proof than that. No! Man has no monopoly of love. It is a

passion which inspires the heart of creatures lower in the scale of life than he.

Then wherein lies the quality which differentiates us from the brutes which perish? "If it is not in our love," you answer, "it must be in our intelligence." Do not let us boast ourselves unduly, and build our pyramid of pride upon its apex. I know that man's intelligence is of a higher type and that the structure of his brain denotes a large advance upon lower orders of existence. But there are times when our sense of superiority amounts to an actual injustice to the furred and feathered creatures who share with us the tenancy of Time. In our self-conceit we describe them as "dumb animals." They are no more dumb than we are. If you think they are, make the simple experiment of sowing a pennyworth of turnip seed in your back garden, and let one green linnet see you do it. In less than half an hour the hedgerow will be green with them. He will have gone through all the parish and told every member of his tribe, and before you have finished raking in the seed the birds will be assembled for the banquet. We pride ourselves upon our architectural skill, and talk in high terms of praise of those ugly conglomerations of bricks and mortar, behind the ramparts of which we fence ourselves from the inclemencies of weather. There is not a chaffinch in the orchard who for sheer artistry could not put our clumsy work to shame. A chaffinch's nest is a poem, and its external adornment the very last word in camouflage. Industry, affection, skill in contriving and sagacity in execution, are all possessed by bird

and beast, and the more I study the habits of these furred and feathered folk, the more I marvel at the dower with which God gifted them and fitted them for their own domain of domesticity.

Yet between us and them there is a great gulf fixed. What is it that constitutes our certificate of manhood? Wherein is our superiority a glory which excelleth? When the ancient Greeks called man "the uplooking one," they laid their finger upon the essential fact. They called attention not only to the attitude of his body, but also to the posture of his soul. Man only is the worshiper, the only creature capable of lifting up his face without spot to God. The dog has fidelity, but he has no faith. The beaver is a mighty builder, but he erects no sanctuary. The ape may be taught to simulate a man in a mimicry more or less grotesque, but the most educated monkey has never yet been taught to say his prayers. Man alone is the architect of the altar, the cloister and the shrine. He alone shares with the angels that mystic impulse which waits and wonders and worships and adores. It is that faculty of worship which sets us apart, with God's seal upon our forehead, and a consciousness of sonship within our hearts. The broad line of demarcation, which separates us from the brutes, and marks us out as of a nobler lineage, is in the fact that we can pray. That is our true patent of nobility, attested of the Holy Ghost, and registered in heaven, the homeland of the soul. "He hath set eternity in their hearts."

Just a word as to the universality of that distinctive

attribute. It is common to the race. Wherever man is found in history he is discovered to be religious. Ancient or modern, Oriental or Occidental, pagan or Christian, he is ever a worshiper. The color of his skin, the clime which he inhabits, his modes of thought and manner of self-expression, may be utterly diverse, but fundamentally he is of the family of faith and potentially a child of God. Come with me into the African desert, and discover a Bushman, the lowest specimen of human kind—ugly, ignorant, dirty in body, darkened in mind. To all appearances he is only a half-developed brute; but he is on his knees! What is he doing? He is worshiping. But his altar is foul and bloody, his ritual is bestial, his worship is ignorant and besotted. Yes! but it is there; and crude and cruel though it is, it marks him out as mightier than the beasts which stalk him for their prey. In his forlorn, defeatured soul there quivers the instinct which is the remnant of man's primal heritage. "Ethiopia is stretching out her hands to God." Perhaps you have seen a fetish brought home from Western Africa, a crudely carved and hideously fantastic doll; and as you have looked upon it you may have laughed to think that men bow down and worship a thing like that. If you look at it aright, you will not laugh, but weep. That fetish is for us a theme of shame and burning tears. There are men and women, in the heart of Africa, who would have loved the Lord Jesus Christ with a deeper passion of devotion than ever our hearts have known—*if only we had given them the chance.* The most hideous idol ever

fashioned by men's fingers is simply an expression of the heart-sob of humanity. "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might even come before his presence."

Never be ashamed to pray. It is the hall-mark of divinity stamped upon our poor humanity. It is our chief certificate of sonship with God. Only as you pray can you come to the fullness of the stature of your manhood. You can transact business, discuss politics, indulge in recreation, and yet be nothing more than a well-educated animal. But when you pray, you take heaven and earth to witness that you are a man, made in God's image, created for his glory and destined to share his companionship through endless ages. Prayer invests your life with an horizon wide as the universe, and dowers you with a heritage as enduring as Eternity.

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

VII

THE MAGNETISM OF THE CROSS

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.—*John* 12. 32.

THE splendid dream of universal empire has always exercised a powerful fascination upon the minds of men. It has constituted an ideal of human government which, if realized, would make the whole race kin, uniting all the scattered tribes of earth in one indissoluble brotherhood. For if all men, everywhere, were yielding allegiance to one throne and scepter, living in obedience to one law, cherishing the same hopes and aspirations, the world would become a gigantic commonwealth, in which war would be impossible, and all men's good would be each man's care.

To the militant imagination of the conqueror the goal of universal monarchy has seemed attainable only by means of ruthless subjugation, and from Alexander to Napoleon they have endeavored by the rude blows of battle to weld the nations into one. But military force has signally failed to achieve the federation of the world. In every scheme of conquest, personal ambition has been the master-motive, and has proved to be the fatal weakness of mere brute strength. The conqueror has marched on his majestic way until one mightier than himself has thrust him from the seat of power. All the great military empires of the past have

perished, because in unmixed selfishness there is no element of true stability.

Social reformers, from the days of Socrates and Plato to those of Ruskin and Carlyle, have dreamed their dreams of a regenerated society. They have advocated theories, the practice of which would eradicate all evils, right all wrongs, and cause the millennium to dawn without delay. But the ancient sage and the modern philosopher are alike in this—the glowing optimism of youth is succeeded by the blank pessimism which beclouds their later years. Both Plato and Carlyle become bitter and satirical, and seem to despair of all men and of their own ideals. They live long enough to discover that mere philosophy cannot reform men. They are aroused from their splendid dreams of a reconstructed humanity by the incontrovertible facts of human obstinacy, profligacy, and the innate corruption of the race. And at the last, in sheer despair as to the efficiency of their own panacea for evil, they would hand men over to the stern discipline of law as the only means of effecting their redemption.

In sharp antithesis to every scheme of conquest, and to every method of social reformation, stands this startling statement of the Nazarene: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." Surely, that is the most tremendous declaration the world has ever heard. The condition is unique, the assertion is so emphatic, the issues so far-reaching, that the words of Christ arrest attention and compel the ages to give heed. Is this the language of a village carpenter, living in some fool's paradise, building and

shaping his castles in the air like an unsubstantial dream? If so, his words are as the idle wind, and their prophecy is vain. If Jesus Christ is nothing more than man, then the language which he here employs is the evidence of an infinite presumption, the expression of an egotism which is positively without a parallel in history. But if Jesus Christ is God, the Deity incarnate, the heavenly King who comes to claim the kingdoms of the earth as his possession, then the regal spirit of these words is in accordance with his royal dignity, and his claim, vast as it is, is nevertheless commensurate with his divine personality. Jesus of Nazareth can occupy no middle position. He claims too much for that. He is either the King eternal, whose right it is to reign, and whose throne is for ever and ever, or else he is the greatest impostor that has ever led astray the hearts and the minds of men. Do not, therefore, confuse the issue or close your eyes to the importance of the facts. Christ claims to dominate the world. How does he substantiate his right to that universal monarchy?

Will you notice, first of all, the very close connection which exists between Christ's startling declaration and the event which immediately preceded it. The feast of the Passover was approaching, and Jerusalem was thronged with the pilgrim bands, "devout men out of every nation under heaven." Christ's entry into the city had been hailed with joyous acclamation. The narrow streets had echoed to the loud hosannas of the people. The Pharisees, in brooding spite and envy, said among themselves, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." Then

came certain Greeks, proselytes of the gate, aliens by birth, but Jews by conviction and religion. They had heard from the multitude of the doings and doctrines of this new Rabbi, and prompted by those vague spiritual longings which even Judaism had failed to satisfy, they came in personal quest of Jesus that they might hear from his lips some wonderful word of life. When Philip had conferred with Andrew, and they together had brought the news to Jesus that the Greeks desired an audience with him, a strange and wondrous joy took possession of the Master's soul. In deep spiritual ecstasy he cried, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." "Now is the crisis of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." What was it that wrought the Christ to such intense emotion? The incident seems trivial enough What was there in it to warrant the assertion of so positive and complete a triumph? With true prophetic instinct Christ saw the vision of a seeking world, inquiring its way to his cross. In that group of aliens he plucked the first-fruits of that great harvest of souls which has since been gathered in from the Gentile world. He saw from afar the dawning of that golden age when the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. That day he began to see of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied.

The Master's joy communicated itself to his disciples. Eagerly they seized upon the thought that the hour of his temporal sovereignty had at last arrived. That had already proved itself an epoch-making day in their life's history. They had taken part that morning in the strik-

ing pageant of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. They had heard the ringing plaudits of the crowd. They had rejoiced to see the reverent homage which had been rendered to their Lord. Was not this the psychological moment for a kingly declaration? Christ had but to speak the word, and he would be carried on the crest of the wave of popular enthusiasm to the royal throne of David, with the crown of Israel as his assured possession. But Christ hushes the shout of exultation rising to their lips by that pregnant parable of a corn of wheat. He shows how the life that is lived for self must always abide alone. It is the selfless life, that pours itself out, and offers itself up, and gives itself away, that yields the harvest of abundant blessing. The throne upon which they would have thrust him was, after all, the symbol of a very limited authority, the seat of a dynasty circumscribed by racial antipathies. The cross to which he resolutely journeyed was the true throne of the universe. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

The startling nature of this declaration is considerably obscured by our familiarity with the phrase in which the declaration is conveyed. The "lifting up" of Christ has been so long the subject of painters' brush and poets' muse that the shame and scandal of the cross has been concealed beneath a wealth of color and exquisite imagery. The cross is no longer a death-rack. It has become a toy, a jeweled ornament, a mere device to be emblazoned on the banner, or used to enrich an architectural design. Translate Christ's

phrase into its modern English equivalent, and you will understand the sudden revulsion of popular opinion, and the perished enthusiasm of the disciples. "And I, if I be hanged by the neck, will draw all men unto myself." Do you find anything attractive in the common gallows? Is there anything magnetic in the hangman's rope? Are not all the associations of a felon's death hideously repulsive? And to these Jews, death by crucifixion was a far more shameful thing than any other mode of execution. How is it, then, that Christ deliberately lays down this phenomenal condition of success? Can victory be achieved through failure? Is the path of shame and stern humiliation the true path to glory? Surely, that is a paradox which contradicts every accepted theory of conquest.

But if we would gain the point of view from which Christ contemplates the conquest of the world, we must turn back to the parallel passage in a previous chapter, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." One passage is an effective commentary upon the other. Placed side by side, they become luminous with one great spiritual truth. They reveal the redemptive purpose of the "uplifting." Christ's coming was not casual. His advent was not an accident. The cross erected upon Golgotha was not in the nature of an experiment; it was the exclamation mark of God's hostility to sin. He who suffered upon Calvary was not the mere victim of man's hate and

envy. He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. His death was foreordained to achieve the redemption of the race. Christ makes no appeal to social ambition or national aspiration. Beneath all the superficial differences which divide men he recognized the common need which makes them one—a need which manifests itself in various ways, but which prompts men, the wide world over, to the quest of a personal salvation from sin. And knowing what was in the heart of man, with a deep appreciation of its hunger and want and woe, Christ offers himself as the antidote to every spiritual bane. He comes as the Life-giver to men already under the condemnation of death. Over against the sin of the world, he erects his cross, and in answer to human guilt he makes the great atonement once for all. It is an empire of hearts, a kingdom of redeemed, cleansed, consecrated lives over which Christ comes to reign; and he bases his throne not upon the sacrifice of others, but upon the sacrifice of himself, and by that self-abnegation his kingdom stands eternally secure. Other men have marched through blood and fire and vapor of smoke to seize a corruptible crown, and the bauble has fallen from their grasp almost as soon as the prize was won. But without noise of battle or the weapons of carnal strife Christ marched to victory, shedding no blood save his own, which he shed for the life of the world, and by that blood-shedding he has become the Conqueror of all the ages, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and lay it at his pierced feet. In enunciating the condition of empire Christ utters the prophecy of a

marvelous magnetic power which should center in his cross and radiate throughout the world. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." Note the scope of that divine attraction. It covers the widest possible area. It includes the greatest possible number. It overleaps the barriers of race and caste and creed. His arms are wide enough to embrace a world, his love is as vast as the firmament in which it swings. But has Christ's prophecy been fulfilled, or is it, after all, only the empty boast of a self-deluded man? Let nineteen centuries give answer to the question. Wherever the Crucified has been uplifted before the eyes of men his marvelous magnetic power has been made manifest. The cultured Greeks discovered in him a greater charm and winsomeness than ever they had found in art or literature or their far-famed philosophy. The proud warriors of Rome, children of an imperial race that had set the heel of conquest upon half the globe, felt the subduing power of the uplifted Christ, and yielded allegiance to a Conqueror more majestic than any Cæsar in whose legions they had fought. The barbaric hordes that peopled North and Western Europe forgot their fabled gods, and turned from their grim altars to behold the Crucified, and were by him redeemed from heathen darkness and pagan superstition. Every century that has succeeded has brought its trophies to swell the triumph of his train. The nail-pierced hand has laid its scepter upon all that is noblest in human life and claimed it for his kingdom. That which was degraded has been uplifted, that which was defiled has been made clean, and the

most far-wandered of the sons of men have been brought nigh and adopted into the family of God.

What, then, is this magnetic power which centers in the cross? What is there so sublime in the anguish of the dying Christ that it should attract the eyes and win the hearts of all men? It is the spectacle of supreme self-sacrifice. But is it nothing more? It is the demonstration of a love which passeth knowledge—of a love which freely drank the bitter dregs of death that it might impart to others the power of an endless life. It is the manifested mystery of the heart of God which lays its wondrous spell upon the hearts of men. It is a sight which once seen can never be forgotten. It is a power which once felt revolutionizes the whole course of human life. Every other conqueror has won submission by the sword, and held his kingdom by the force of arms. Christ wins his widening way by gentleness and mercy, and melts the most obdurate heart by the sweet compelling power of love. Saint Paul, who takes as his proudest title "the bond-slave of Jesus Christ," reveals the chain wherewith Christ binds his captives to his chariot wheel, when he says, "The love of Christ constraineth me."

"Who that one moment has the least descried Him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside Him,
Pleasures and power that are not and that are—

"Ay, amid all men bear himself thereafter
Smit with a solemn and a sweet surprise,
Dumb to their scorn and turn on their laughter
Only the dominance of earnest eyes?"

Christ's conquests of the human heart are the marvels of the centuries, unsurpassed and unsurpassable. Listen to the testimony of the great Napoleon. Conversing one day at Saint Helena, as his custom was, about the great men of antiquity, and comparing himself with them, he suddenly turned to one of his suite with the inquiry, "Who was Jesus Christ?" The officer evaded the interrogation by saying that he had not yet taken time to consider. "Well, then," said Napoleon, "I will tell you." He began by comparing Christ with himself, and with the heroes of the past, and he showed how Jesus far surpassed them all. Said he: "I think I know somewhat of human nature, and I tell you all these were men, not one is like unto him. Jesus Christ was more than man. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded great empires, but upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded his empire upon love, and to this very day there are millions who would gladly die for him. . . . Men wonder at the conquests of Alexander; but here is a Conqueror who draws men to himself for their highest good; who unites to himself and incorporates into his kingdom, not a nation, but the whole human race."

Men may devise what theories they like concerning the doctrine of the atonement, but they cannot get away from the incontestable fact that the magnetism of Jesus centers in his cross. His ethical doctrine has a charm peculiarly its own. His sinless life in the midst of a sinful world is the miracle of all the ages. But it is the uplifted Saviour, the gospel of the Crucified, that

makes the irresistible appeal. Some men endeavor to get rid of this factor, to explain it away, and relegate it to an inconspicuous place in their theology. They lay the emphasis upon the Sermon on the Mount, and declare the teaching therein contained to be sufficient to reform the world. Christ did not think so. To Him the cross was the center of the whole circumference, his death the key to every revelation. And does not the logic of events prove conclusively that this, and nothing less than this, accounts for the triumphs of Christianity? Were the South Sea Islanders redeemed from their revolting cannibalism by a code of morals, or by the lever of Christ's love as demonstrated by his sacrificial death? The light which shines from Calvary has illumined the unutterable night of sin; and by the victory of the cross Christ is subduing the world unto himself. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

But how is it this prophecy is only partially fulfilled? How is it we see not yet all things put under him? In the infancy of the church, the Spirit-baptized apostles realized that the chief end of their existence was to evangelize the world. In obedience to the imperative command of Christ, they fulfilled, to the utmost limit of their power, the great commission to preach the gospel to every creature; and the result of their tireless ministry went far to revolutionize the world. But in the corrupt mediæval church the high ideals of primitive Christianity were largely lost sight of, the fire of its inspiration became choked by the accretion of pagan ritual and false dogma. The crying need of the

Christless world was well-nigh forgotten amid the unholy strife of mere ecclesiasticism. It was not until the nineteenth century dawned that the church was reawakened to a sense of its responsibility to the myriad lives of men. And even to-day, after a whole century of renewed activity in foreign missions, we do most imperfectly apprehend both the need of the nations and the binding obligation which that need imposes upon us.

Christ's prophecy of universal dominion is not yet realized, because even after the lapse of nineteen centuries there are vast areas of the world's life where the Crucified has never been uplifted. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" We send one man to convert a million, and then wonder why the progress is so slow. We spend £10 upon our pleasures and give a beggarly half-a-crown to the work of winning the world to God. When will the church leave off playing at foreign missions, and set to work with well-girt loin to fulfill her Lord's behest? The gospel chariot drives so heavily because so many of us are content to ride upon it, instead of supplying its motive power. The heathen world remains unwon because Christ's army halts to enjoy the pleasures of life, while the famishing hosts, beleaguered by the devil, are dying for lack of the living bread.

Christ's prophecy will be fulfilled only when each member of his church bears upon his heart continually

the burden which the Master bore—the burden of the world's sin and misery and woe. And when that load is felt upon the life, indolence will become impossible, niggardliness will cease to be. The soul will be constrained to cry, "Lord! what wilt thou have me do?" I stand to reiterate Christ's call for laborers. I would pledge your lives to this great crusade. I would urge you to pray with a greater passion of entreaty, "Thy kingdom come." In his name I ask for a larger liberality in the gifts you lay upon this sacred altar. Make no mistake! The measure of your self-sacrifice to-day will be the measure of your joy in the final triumph of the King. And I want no memory of gifts withheld or service left unrendered to mar the perfect bliss of that one far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves.

"O that, with yonder sacred throng,
We at his feet may fall!
We'll join in the everlasting song,
And crown him Lord of all."

VIII

THE WOUNDED CHRIST

And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.—*Zechariah* 13. 6.

THOSE are the wounds which rankle most—the wounds with which we are wounded in the house of our friends. We can bear "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," the wild rebuffs of a reckless world. To the chastening sorrows which fall upon us from the Almighty we can bow our heads with meekness, and even in life's darkest hour begin to say, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." But an ungrateful child, or a faithless friend, can stab the heart with a wound which will not heal, and to the original hurt can add an irritant poison which will carry its virus through your veins into all your after life. David confesses to the pain produced by such a treacherous thrust. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." The

psalmist knew what it was to drink to the dregs the bitter cup of a faithless friend's betrayal; and there are few experiences more paralyzing to the human soul than that.

But of whom is the prophet speaking as being thus poignantly wounded—wounded in the house of his friends? If you search into the context, you will find that it is God who is represented as He whom they have pierced. That is the astonishing thing about this text. If it had been a warrior returning from the battlefield, or a prophet rejected by his people, or a politician deposed from his authority and hurled from the pedestal of popular esteem, we could have understood it. Such men are often grievously mishandled. But how can God be wounded in the house of his friends? Is he not the King, sitting upon the throne, high and lifted up, and far remote from the spleen and malice of hateful, vindictive men? How can we reconcile the thought of Deity, dwelling in light supernal, and yet smitten and afflicted by wanton cruelty?

These words may have local and intermediate meanings. I know all about the difficulty of dislocated texts. I recognize the practical impossibility of recovering the exact viewpoint from which these prophecies were uttered. There may be a dozen different suppositions to account for words like these upon a purely humanistic plane. But their full meaning can be found only in the wounded Christ, that strange, strange Man, hanging in agony on his awful cross, mocked by the multitude, rejected by the rulers, scourged and crucified by the soldiers, pierced with thorn and nail and

spear. Isaiah saw him hanging on that dreadful rood five hundred years before the *cross* was built—saw all the tragedy and all the triumph of that great sacrifice for sin. Standing in the porch of prophecy and looking down the vista of the years, he saw that

> " . . . green hill far away,
> Without a city wall,
> Where the dear Lord was crucified,
> Who died to save us all;"

and as he gazed upon that Man of sorrows, who so fully fraternized with grief, with a new wonder of worship he began to whisper: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." He saw the tragedy, and he saw the triumph too; for the cross was only a stage on the way to spiritual empire. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

But Zechariah's vision seems to me to proceed from the very point at which Isaiah's closes. This man sees beyond the hill called Calvary to the hill called Olivet. The cross and the sepulcher are all behind him. The world's derision and disdain have ceased. From the mount of the ascension, the risen Christ is ready for his upward flight, far above all principality and power and dominion and might. He has received the name which is above every name, and all authority hath been given to him both in heaven and on earth. The Con-

queror of Death is returning to his throne, to the glory which he had with the Father before all time began.

I wonder if we can catch, through this man's anointed eyes, some dim token of the splendor which unveiled itself before his astonished gaze. The thoroughfares of heaven are thronged by angel hosts. The gates of pearl swing back to receive the Prince of Peace. Cherubim and Seraphim are chanting in exultant chorus, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." "Who is this King of glory?" rings out the challenging archangel; and all heaven shakes to the thunder of the magnificent reply, "The Lord of Life who triumphed o'er the grave, he is the King of glory." To that announcement Time and Eternity alike reverberate, and all the angels cry aloud, "Amen!"

Throughout the city of our God, curiosity is rife. The question flies from lip to lip, In what guise will he come? Will he return as he went forth, before ever he took flesh and dwelt among the sons of men; or will he have changed by adding a yet greater glory to a dignity utterly divine? Even as they ask the question he enters the open door, and at a glance they see that he comes, not as he went forth. He who is essentially a Spirit wears a body as a vesture. The feet and hands are pierced with nail-prints, the side is gashed open by a Roman spear, the fair white brow is circled by punctured wounds, where a crown of thorns was pressed in hideous disdain upon his once dishonored head; the back is scored by a knotted scourge, plied by a pagan's fierce contempt. Was there ever such mis-

handling of so fair a Prince? Are these the evidences of his victory? As they gaze upon those crimson tokens of his passion, they question in astonishment, "What are these wounds in thine hands?"

Sorrowfully he makes answer, "These wounds? These are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

"Friends?" they ask, in deep indignation, "Friends, did you say? Nay! fiends you mean. Enoch was your friend, and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and Samuel and Jephthah and David and the prophets, but the house these men tried to establish must have degenerated into a den of devils to treat the Lord of Life like this."

You and I have grown accustomed to the vision of the Crucified. We have seen the spectacle of Calvary so often that we can pass it by as though it were a common sight. Our hearts have grown callous, because accustomed, to his anguish. We are no longer awed by the unutterable sorrow of the Lamb. If angels have hearts to break, they must have broken their very hearts when they saw what man had done to God's Well-Beloved. If angels have tears to shed, they must have wept tears of blood as they marked the base indignities which man had heaped upon the wondrous Saviour of the world. It was a sight at which heaven shuddered, and from which the angels veiled their faces with their wings, unable to behold the tragic evidences of our tremendous shame. The Heir of the vineyard came but once to claim his heritage, and by wicked husbandmen was cast out and slain. That is the world's greatest tragedy. Once in the midst of the ages God

deigned to be the Guest of earth, and all the hospitality we offered him was a manger bed and a borrowed sepulcher. He stooped from a throne of glory, and we nailed him to a tree.

Yet those wounds which were once the objects of derision have become the objects of adoration. It is the broken heart of Christ that has healed the broken heart of the world. It is the nail-pierced hands of Christ that have cleansed our leprosy, opened our blind eyes and quickened our dead souls into newness of life.

O Man of the Cross, by whose five wounds our aching, sin-cursed, conscience-bitten lives are healed and cleansed and made whole again, come in thy pitying condescension and lift us from the dust! From all hardness of heart and contempt of thy word, good Lord deliver us! Unstop our deaf ears that we may hear thee crying, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow! By thine agony and sweat of blood, by thy cross and passion, by thy precious death and burial, and by thy glorious resurrection and ascension redeem us from our sin.

Do you realize that those five wounds are the source of all rapture of the spirits of just men made perfect? There they stand before the throne, that great host which no man can number, and they sing a new song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." That heavenly

anthem invites the responsive melody of earth. If the ransomed host worship with rapture the wounded Christ, surely those wounds are to be glorified by us poor sinners who have accepted the great salvation which He wrought out for men. For what is the ground of our rejoicing? Turn back to the beginning of the chapter and read the opening proclamation. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." The prophet's eye was ever turned to a day far distant, but fixed in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. His brethren testified that there should be a birth in history which should mark a new meridian of time; and some of them shared with him foretokens of a travail which should issue in a world's redemption. I know of no date for the historical fulfillment of that presage, except the first Good Friday. I know of no other fount, in all the wide universe of God, which has such cleansing efficacy, except the fountain which was opened in the riven side of our Redeeming Lord. It is "a fountain for sin and for uncleanness." Where else can you discharge that crimson stain? The pool of Siloam cannot do it. The snows of Hermon cannot wash us white. The Jordan, in full spate, is powerless to cleanse the foulness of our human guilt. Abana and Pharpar cannot rid us of our leprosy. Christina Rossetti was right when she sang:

"None other Lamb, none other Name,
None other hope in heaven or earth or sea,
None other hiding-place from guilt and shame,
None beside thee."

Have you any other hiding-place? Have you made morality your refuge, and wrapped the righteous robe of your respectability about you, thanking God in your Pharisaic complacency that you are not as other men, thieves, extortioners, adulterers, or "even as this publican"? If that is your only shelter, you will find the flimsy fence of ethical superiority a refuge of lies which will go down in ruin when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. In the day of accusation, when conscience rises as a strong man armed, we shall need a defense far more substantial. In the day of discrimination, when God makes searching inquisition for sin, all our fine-spun philosophies will prove unavailing. When the foundations of the earth are being removed and the firmament is melting in the final conflagration, we shall come back to the prayer our mothers taught us:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

"Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone:
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

No dead man was ever found with his arms entwined about that cross. At the place called Calvary the dead are made alive again and the lost are found. To peni-

tent and believing souls that Wounded Christ has been through all the centuries "a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And those who have made him their Refuge find that life on this side of Jesus is vastly different from life on that. The surge of sin, and the deep undertow of guilt's remorse have ceased for evermore.

"Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp his name;
Preach him to all, and cry in death,
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'"

IX

THE PIERCED HANDS

And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.—*Zechariah* 13. 6.

In a previous exposition we caught a glimpse of the ascended Lord, entering in at heaven's gate with the lacerations of Calvary still fresh upon him, the nail-prints and the spear-thrust significantly red. In astonishment the angels question Him, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" And to their interrogation he makes the sorrowful reply, "These wounds are those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." That was an enigma which no celestial mind could understand or properly interpret. It covered the deep abyss of man's transgression, a pit of ignominy no angel ever fathomed. But the wounds which made them weep and wonder are the chief source of rapture to the spirits of just men made perfect. They are the marks of that sore travail by which a ruined race has been redeemed. Ceaselessly they sing the praise of Him who loved and loosed them from their sins in his own blood:

> "'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cry,
> 'To be exalted thus!'
> 'Worthy the Lamb!' our hearts reply;
> 'For he was slain for us.'"

Sir Robertson Nicol described those wounds as (1)

Fountains of Grace, (2) Titles of Glory, and (3) Seals of His power to Save. Let us consider them under those three aspects.

1. Fountains of Grace

If ever we are with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation, it is to Calvary we must come. If ever we are to find ease for the festering wounds inflicted upon our life by sin's envenomed fang, we must apply the balm distilled from the wounds of Christ. How those wounds of his heal our broken hearts and cleanse our stricken consciences from all their guilty stain, no theology man invented has ever adequately explained. Every theory of atonement is an attempt to explore a mystery so profound that mortal mind is baffled. But facts are finer than theories and more impressive than theologies. The healed man is still the unanswerable argument which routs the logic of the scribes. Right down the centuries the church has witnessed the miracles of personal redemption. Shattered lives have been recreated by the mystic touch of the Nazarene. Souls defiled by hideous transgression have been made clean every whit by his indwelling. Cannibals have been converted, and devil priests subdued by his matchless grace. The vilest sinners the world has known have learned in the school of the Crucified the very genius of sainthood.

> "I ask them whence their victory came;
> They, with united breath,
> Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
> Their triumph to his death."

What happened in the dread transaction of Calvary we shall never be able to state exhaustively in terms of human speech. But this, at least, we know assuredly, there was opened that day in the house of David a fountain for sin and for all uncleanness.

And the first grace proceeding from the fountain is the grace of repentance. That is a word which has gone out of fashion, with the result that the virility of religion has markedly declined. There are certain elementary ideas you cannot dispense with without disaster. John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Jesus came into Galilee, saying, "The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe in the gospel." The apostles caught the same clear accent and demanded the same clear issue. In his sermon on the Day of Pentecost Peter did not mince his speech to suit the palate of the people, or hedge his doctrine to curry favor with the crowd. He carried his life in his hand, but he shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God. He preached the Crucified as the one hope of a rebellious world: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay." There was no disposition in that blunt fisherman to tone down the facts, or to hide a truth which had become distasteful to his audience. Simple, direct, incisive speech, with a cutting edge in every sentence, he thundered forth, "Let all the house of Israel know

assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." That is a fair sample of apostolic preaching, without reserve and without apology. Far too many of us are afraid of our congregations—afraid of criticism, although the critics are merely gossips lacking more permanent employment. Peter was not afraid, although his congregation included the men who had murdered the Hope of Israel. And even though he shared his fate, Peter, not less than Paul, was determined not to know anything among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified. What was the result of such fearless proclamation? What effect did it produce upon those who listened? "They were pricked in their heart." They were not tickled in their fancy, or flattered in their supposed intellectuality. There was a poignant accusation stabbing at their consciences. There was a throb of anguish filling all their inmost life with penitential pain; and in their spiritual grief they began to cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" No man is in the true apostolical succession unless he can arouse the passion of repentance, and persuade bad men to forsake sin and serve righteousness. When Peter descended from his pulpit he found three thousand souls weeping their way to the cross; and such a sight is the true preacher's only recompense. It is not worth while being a preacher unless you are leading men to the Crucified and sharing the joy of the redeemed.

It was the sight of the wounded Christ which awoke the first penitence in Saul of Tarsus, and turned a persecutor into an apostle. How fiercely he had raged

against that Man of Galilee! With what vindictive zeal he had made havoc of the church! But on the Damascus road a nail-pierced hand arrested him, a voice thrilling with the importunity of love demanded, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" That broke him, and brought the proud Pharisee to his bended knees. Out of his once rebellious, but now submissive, heart there gushed a stream of deep contrition, the flood of which knew no drought through all his subsequent apostleship.

You and I will never hate sin with a perfect hatred until we look upon Him whom our sins pierced. You and I will never love holiness with a perfect love until we look up into the face which was marred more than any man's and with Saint Paul begin to say, "He loved me, and gave himself to the death for me." Do not let us waste our time in cursing Caiaphas and pillorying Pilate and judging Judas and slandering Simon Peter. We are all involved in the great tragedy of the cross. We transfixed with nails his blessed hands and feet. We tore his side with that fierce spear-thrust. It was sin that slew the Lord of Life—our sins, yours and mine. If the world had been less defiled Jesus need never have come. If man had not sinned, the Son of God need not have suffered. The son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost, and to give his life a ransom for many.

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned he stood;
Sealed my pardon with his blood:
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!"

I know that is old theology, but it is all I have to live by, and one day it will be all I will dare to die by. I cannot do with one of these little Christs they have whittled down to something next door to nothing. A real sinner needs a real Saviour. I need a Christ, big enough, high enough, holy enough to stoop from heaven's height down to the level of my ignobility and sin and shame, and lift me out of the deep abyss. And that is what I have found in Jesus. And from the fountain which was opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness I received first of all the grace of repentance.

The second grace proceeding from the fountain is the grace of remission. This grace follows swiftly after the first. There is no measure of forgiveness which can be withheld from the sufficiently broken and contrite heart. I do not care what a man has done. I do not care where a man has been. He may be the most guilty wretch on all the earth, but in Christ's wounds I have for him a gospel high as heaven and wide as the horizon. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." There is no if, or but, or peradventure about that proclamation. If we will repent, he will forgive, and that forgiveness is without measure. Even Isaiah, with all his rich vocabulary, had to strain his diction to describe it. He will multiply to pardon. Like wave chasing wave over the face of the mighty deep, God's grace, like billows of mercy, sweeps over the contrite soul,

cleansing and keeping it clean. That fact gives urgency to the invitation:

"O escape to yonder mountain;
There begin to watch and pray:
Christ invites you to the fountain;
Come and wash your sins away.
Do not tarry!
Come to Jesus while you may.

"Grace is flowing like a river;
Millions there have been supplied:
Still it flows as fresh as ever,
From the Saviour's wounded side.
None need perish!
All may live, for Christ hath died."

2. Titles of Glory

Those symbols of shame are Christ's chief marks of honor now. He wears them as a warrior wears his scars. They tell of the battle in which he fought and vanquished sin. There was never a warrior in all earth's history who travailed and triumphed as he did. It was a stern fight, but not a sterile one. So many so-called victories are indistinguishable from defeat. But in his triumph all the ages share. That glorified body of the world's Redeemer is the only body in the universe which was wounded *for* sin. Other bodies have been wounded *by* sin. Yours has, and mine. O how scabbed and botched we are, disfigured and polluted by its stain! Ah! what scars we carry in our conscience, and how carefully we conceal our shame. But his were vicarious wounds, endured for the sake of others, and they mark him out from every other member of the

race. Was not his name called Jesus, that he should save his people from their sins? That is the function upon which all his fame is built, and apart from it his name is a misnomer. By his suffering came salvation, by his wounds our healing, by his death our glorious deliverance. All his dignity, in heaven and on earth, is based on that. In the midst of the throne there standeth a Lamb, *as though it had been slain.* And gazing on that wondrous spectacle, the saints cry "Alleluia," and all the angels say "Amen."

"The dear tokens of his passion
Still his dazzling body bears;
Cause of endless exultation
To his ransomed worshipers;
With what rapture
Gaze we on those glorious scars!"

3. Seals of His Power to Save

Not many months ago, in an Oxfordshire village, an old saint lay dying. For over eighty years she had been on pilgrimage to Zion, until her face had grown bright with heaven's approaching glory. An Anglo-Catholic priest, under the entire misapprehension that none of his parishioners could find access to the City unless he unlocked the gate, called to visit her. "Madam," he said, "I have come to grant you absolution."

And she, in her simplicity, not knowing what that word meant, inquired, "What is that?"

"I have come to forgive your sins," was the reply.

"May I look into your hand?" she answered. Gazing for a moment into the hand of the priest, she turned

and looked him squarely in the face and said, "Sir! You are an impostor."

"Impostor!" the scandalized cleric protested.

"Yes, sir, an impostor! *The Man who forgives my sin has a nail-print in his palm.*" She may not have been a very profound theologian, but she was a very practical Christian, and knew from experience the Author of her salvation. "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," and that prerogative he shares with none. Every genuine pardon bears the sign-manual of a Wounded Hand.

That lacerated hand is a very gentle hand, with a touch more tender than a woman's; more soothing than a mother's fingers laid upon a fevered brow. That hand, which has the nail-print in its palm, is the only hand in the universe which can touch a broken heart without adding to its pain. Yours cannot, nor mine. What clumsy comforters we are, hurting where we meant to heal, adding poignancy to wounds we are utterly incompetent to close! Any man who has endeavored to fulfill the ministry of consolation, knows, by sad experience, his insufficiency. Many a time I have been called to visit those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and as I have hastened through the streets, I have prayed with passionate entreaty: "O Christ, come with me, I dare not go alone. What can I say to comfort those that mourn? Their home is desolate, the light of their life has gone out in darkness. Without thee, I shall only fumble with their tragedy and leave them still forlorn. In thy hand alone are the bandage and the balm for such sorely wounded

souls." Sometimes I have stood for minutes on the doorstep, not daring to ring the bell, because so overwhelmed with a sense of my own inadequacy. But when I have crossed the threshold, the Healer was there, pouring balm on their hearts and wiping the tears from their eyes. I never fully realized what the grace of God could do for men and women in trouble until the Great War deluged the world with desperate sorrow. Every man who exercised his ministry in those dark days carries in his memory convincing proofs of a Presence which is not far from any one of us; but especially near to those who mourn in Zion.

"The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again."

Yes, they are gentle hands; but they are also mighty, with an omnipotence we cannot measure. Those hands which were transfixed to the cross are the only hands which have broken the bars of the grave and smitten the monster of whom all men were afraid.

"Death could not keep its prey,
Jesus, my Saviour!
He rolled the stone away,
Jesus, my Lord!
Up from the grave he arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
He arose, the Victor from the dark domain,
And he lives forever with his saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

That is why death has lost its sting and the grave can

no more exult in victory. Death is no longer death to them that love God. Death is but God's kiss, which at the last makes up for all. Therefore we sorrow not, as those who have no hope; knowing that them that are asleep in Christ will God bring with him. By the power of the Crucified our most inveterate foe was vanquished. He, having tasted of the sharpness of death, hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

"O Love divine! what hast thou done?
The immortal God hath died for me!
The Father's co-eternal Son
Bore all my sins upon the tree;
The immortal God for me hath died!
My Lord, my Love is crucified.

"Is crucified for me and you,
To bring us rebels back to God."

That was the whole purpose of his dying; and can we, dare we frustrate such amazing grace by our continued contumacy? It is possible for us, even now, to wound the Saviour of the world. His heart is not beyond the reach of our rebuffs. The ungodly crucify him afresh and put him to an open shame. By blasphemy and infamy, by drunkenness and shameless greed, men build another Calvary for him to climb. But far more painful even than these are the wounds he is daily receiving in the house of his friends. It is not the infidels in Hyde Park, but the Laodiceans in the church who humiliate him the most. By our inconsistency and black ingratitude, by our tepid devotion and secret shame of the Name of names, we add to his sufferings lacerations of the spirit more painful than the stripes

which fell upon his body. Surely, as we look upon him whom our sins pierced, the passion of penitence will purge our hearts, and kneeling at his cross we shall begin to cry:

"O let me kiss thy bleeding feet,
And bathe and wash them with my tears!
The story of thy love repeat
In every drooping sinner's ears,
That all may hear the quickening sound,
Since I, even I, have mercy found."

X

THE GREAT CONUNDRUM

Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended?
Who hath gathered the wind in His fists?
Who hath bound the waters in His garment?
Who hath established all the ends of the earth?
What is His name, and what is His son's name?
If thou canst tell?—*Proverbs* 30. 4.

WHAT a hail of questions! Like a rain of arrows, from the bow of the Almighty, they smite in swift succession upon the groping, darkened mind of man. Is there any one, born of woman, who can answer these interrogations, or set them in ordered sequence with a satisfying explanation? Let philosophy attempt the task. Let science explore the problem and offer a solution, if it can. God propounds the riddle. It is addressed to the reason of the race, that it may awaken a fruitful wonder, which shall yield a harvest of reverent inquiry, and culminate in awe, in worship and adoration and submission. That is the purpose of every paradox set forth in prophetic and apostolic speech. They are designed to bring us to the altar, that there we may cultivate the hearing ear and the understanding heart. They are meant to lead us to the sanctuary, that in the silence we may listen to what the Lord our God may say. He is not asking questions to which there is no answer, except by sleight of words, with twisted meanings and exaggerated emphases. He is asking men to think, to consider and be wise. He says: "Come my

children, put two and two together and see how the sum works out at four. Place your ideas in right relation and save yourselves from the *cul-de-sac* of an inverted logic. Let religion be the service of your reason as well as the passion of your soul.

Dr. James Moffatt, in his new translation, gives a luminous revision of the earlier portion of this chapter. In verse one the proper nouns "Ithiel" and "Ucal" are eliminated as altogether meaningless, as indeed they are. With a slight re-pointing of the Massoretic text, he translates them as active verbs and gives the vigorous reading, "The cry of a man weary with the quest for God: 'I am weary, O God, weary and worn in vain.'" That is a valuable emendation, and it affords the key to all that follows after. It is the cry of a questing soul, searching the unsearchable and desiring to discover the ultimate reality. That is the age-long exploration which finds a frontier, but never discovers the final bourne. That is a debate to which there is never any closure, and which no generation can successfully evade. Man's mind was shaped like a mark of interrogation, and from speculation and inquiry he simply cannot cease. He must go on and on, until he dies; and in dying achieves the beatific vision.

"Who hath ascended into heaven, or descended?" There are invisible stairways. There are footprints man did not make, engraven on the rocks and published in the fields. Francis Thompson saw:

> "The traffic of Jacob's ladder,
> Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross."

But the majority of those who huddled with him on the Thames Embankment saw only the hurly-burly of the traffic and the ceaseless ebb and flow of commonplace humanity. The visible cannot account for all you see; it cannot even account for itself. There is a commerce going on between earth and heaven, strange, mysterious pulses of Eternity throbbing through the fevered veins of Time. In the sterile womb of a once lifeless world life was manifested. A planet which was once a cinder became a cradle, teeming with a myriad forms of energy and beauty. Something moved on the face of the waters, robed itself in light as with a garment, spake, and it was done; commanded, and it stood fast. Whence came this energy of life, with its endless power of reproduction? Who was its Author and Finisher? Dost thou know? Canst thou tell?

Look out upon the physical creation, of which you form a part. Watch the giant oaks responsive to the touch of an invisible gale. Whence came those mighty winds which toss the waves and turn the level sea into a mountain range? Why is it that the infuriated waters, lashed into foaming billows, cannot pass their appointed bounds? Is there not Someone holding the winds in his fists and binding the waters in the slack of his garment? Surely, there is Someone in charge of the chariot of the sun. It cannot be all chance; or, if it is, what is to hinder the cosmos turning back to chaos, until the earth becomes a wilderness again? Examine the solid structure which forms the framework of the sphere. Seek out the broad foundations upon which the mountains rest secure. Look at the order,

beauty, and utility of the green and fertile earth—and remember that the poor little planet upon which you stand is only a tiny speck in the vast realms of space. "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking." There is no laggard in all the constellations. Who mapped out a path for the stars and holds them securely in their orbits? "What is his name, and what is his Son's name? If thou canst tell?"

That is the riddle, duly propounded, and stated in terms which the humblest can understand. What is your solution of that? The supreme Intelligence of the universe has set you an examination paper. Sit down and attempt your answer, O man, made in God's image and redeemed by God's Son. You will demonstrate the dignity of your origin only as you rise to the splendid height of this great argument. You will reveal your value as a purchased possession only as, with reverent mind, you begin on earth the quest which culminates at the throne of the Highest.

"The history of humanity is little else than one long wrestle with God's infinite conundrum." Thinkers and dreamers, poets and prophets, philosophers and scientists, in every generation have entered the arena and striven to explore the secret. Some have come proudly, with captious mind and soul that felt no touch of awe, and they have groped blindly at midday or turned God's light into lightning, His blessings into a blight and a curse. Others have come in humility, with reverent

inquiry and nascent faith, and they have added revelation to revelation wherewith to lighten those that sit in darkness. From the arrogant and presumptuous soul God always hides himself, and manifests his presence only to the meek and lowly in heart.

1. *The Atheist* came, and "dropped a plummet down the broad, deep universe, and cried, No God." But a plummet is oft an instrument of impotence and occasionally an engine of despair. There are spaces in the ocean, the depth of which you cannot fathom. You have not a line long enough, or a plummet heavy enough to search the deeps. There are peaks of earth which no man's foot has trod. There are heights into which he cannot ascend, and live. How much less can you explore the infinite, or climb the summits of eternity? The downward gaze sees no further than the slime. It is baffled by the atom and blinded by the débris of its own impatient investigation.

> "The angels keep their ancient places;
> Stir but a stone and start a wing.
> 'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangéd faces,
> That miss the many-splendored thing."

It is the uplifted gaze, the eyes of the heart, the purged vision of the soul, which catches some glimpse of the unutterable glory, and begins to say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of a man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." And none but a fool would say it. The weight of the evidence to the contrary is so overwhelming that blind

unbelief is a more colossal insolence than the supposed credulity of faith. "Ah, yes," you say, "but wise men have ventured that categorical denial—men with a world-wide reputation, skilled in the abstruse sciences, mighty in mathematics and metaphysics and I know not what beside." Skilled, did you say? Skilled in what? A man may be skilled in fossils, and yet be an absolute bungler at broken bones. A man may be able to read the hieroglyphics upon Egyptian monuments, but you would not, on that account, trust him to excise an inflamed appendix. We are very discriminating when it comes to a question of surgery, but for the soul's medicinal treatment we frequently resort to the quack. Give a man all homage in the domain in which he is an acknowledged expert; but do not necessarily regard him as an efficient guide in every other realm of thought. The wisest men, with all their wisdom, cannot tell what a day may bring forth, nor penetrate the veil which hangs upon the unborn to-morrow. John Adams, a brilliant professor in Cambridge University, by a process of pure mathematics, discovered Neptune, added a new planet to the astronomer's map of the heavens, and yet one dark night he failed to find his way home across a Cornish moor, although he was Cornish bred! He could find a planet shining in the firmament, and an ignorant agricultural laborer had to discover for him the path which led directly to his father's door!

Let us cease from boasting about what men know. It is what they do, not know, that constitutes the deep abyss. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he

that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." He holds the key which unlocks all mysteries, and He intrusts it to none beside. After all, what has man seen of the universe? All his life long he has been cooped up in a little corner of it, peering through his telescopes and poring over his spectrums, busy with his crucibles and scalpels and microscopic specimens; and presently he ascends his tiny platform and talks pompously of the wisdom he has acquired, and forgets that he is of yesterday and knows nothing—unless, in humility, he has stretched out hands to God, if haply he may find him. If in his examination of the dust he has failed to discover Deity, he has missed the *summum bonum*. The Supreme Good is not to be found by a geological survey, but by a spiritual intuition. It is a big universe you live in, and with sufficient apparatus you may descry flaming suns which have a solar system in which our planet has no part; but even so, you have not seen all, nor can you see. Look at the mighty mechanism, ceaselessly revolving in the vast realms of space. Is there no Artificer who adjusted its machinery and gave it meaning and momentum? Is there no Architect to account for its purpose and proportion? "What is his name and what is his Son's name? If thou canst tell?"

2. *The Agnostic* came and said, The riddle is unanswerable and the name of Him who holds the winds in his fists is not knowable. There is no alphabet in which to spell it, or faculty wherewith to apprehend his being. That was the contention of Huxley and Herbert Spencer, Tyndall and John Stuart Mill—

learned men, each, in his own order, an expert, bearing a name to conjure with in every civilization upon earth. There they stood, masters of many sciences, face to face with the final mystery, and when pressed to give a considered judgment, they simply said, "I do not know." Now that position is far more respectable than atheism. It has, at least, that finer courage, which is the last expression of humility, openly to acknowledge its own ignorance. It takes a fully educated mind to confess to that. It is the man of tenth-rate mind that presumes to ape omniscience and sets no boundary to mark the limitation of its knowledge. The more a man knows the humbler he grows, and wears with diffidence the laurels of achievement. The rest are apt to swagger with a fussy sense of self-importance, which reveals, rather than conceals, their woeful lack of reverence. Huxley, for instance, never committed himself to denying the possibility of miracles. He simply said he had never seen them happen. And yet he knew —he must have known—that the greatest miracle of all, the appearance of life in a once lifeless world, did happen in some remote period of the planet's history. Geology taught him that. There was a time when the earth was a molten mass, flung out from the heart of the central sun, with no vestige of life upon all its broad expanse. It is an axiom of science that "out of the lifeless the living never comes." There was a German professor who thought he had discovered spontaneous generation, and he published a learned thesis to elucidate his marvelous discovery; but it was our own Doctor Dallinger who demonstrated that the German's test

tubes had not been sufficiently sterilized! That effectually demolished all his specious theories. So far as the most patient and prolonged investigation can determine the axiom still holds good, "Only life can beget life." Once you bridge the gap which separates the lifeless from the living—and you can bridge it only by the Eternal Life which is the Eternal Light—every other miracle is carried with it. The virgin birth, the resurrection and ascension are not nearly such stupendous miracles as that first irruption of Deity into earth's primeval chaos. The Power that formed and filled the ocean caverns and set the protoplasm afloat upon the sun-lit sea, is surely capable of producing life within the life of a lowly Hebrew maid. Why should we accept, without demur, the larger miracle, and yet boggle in unbelief at the wondrous birth at Bethlehem? The God-filled cradle and the God-emptied grave are both on a parity with the wonders wrought already, and are no more contrary to nature than the processes by which nature began to be.

But is the position of agnosticism tenable? Yes! so far as the agnostic admits that he, personally, does not know. No man has a right to testify beyond his experience of the facts. But if he proceeds to argue that, because he does not know, therefore God is unknowable, he commits himself to a syllogism which is manifestly invalid. Because I have pawned, or in some way parted with, my watch, and therefore am unable to tell you the time of day, is no proof that another man, possessed of a chronometer set to Greenwich time, cannot tell you, to a second, how far the day has

run its little round. Because I own no telescope, and therefore am unable to number up the distant suns and stars, would only make it an egregious egotism, on my part, to deny the evidence of those who have made the observatory their second home. Even for Time and Distance you need a special apparatus. Is there no parallel equipment for the spirit that would explore the secrets of Eternity? What if our ignorance is due to our blindness of heart and our destitution of the apparatus of enlightenment? Is it not precisely this disability which Paul suggests as the real root of all denial? "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." So philosophy has not the final dictum. We come to a region of our spirit's quest in which faith finds its legitimate domain. The only answer to agnosticism is a divine revelation. Man, by wisdom, cannot find out God. The onus therefore devolves on Deity to manifest himself, to make known his ways upon earth, his saving health unto all nations. But he can unveil himself only to men born blind, whose unceasing cry is, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law."

XI

THE RIDDLE OF THE AGES

> What is his name, and what is his Son's name?
> If thou canst tell?—*Proverbs* 30. 4.

We have not completed the problem, nor read God's riddle aright, if we stop short of the Name he seeks to elicit from our lips. "What's in a name?" inquires our English bard, and then goes on to answer his question in a quite unsatisfactory way. It is true, "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet," but fragrance is only one characteristic among many which determines its proper classification. If you called a rose a silver sixpence, you would confuse the issue. It is a vegetable and not a mineral, and the two kingdoms are poles apart. So a name is not merely a label. In its origin it may have been more or less arbitrarily attached, but in its use it has gathered meaning which is of fundamental significance. Push the poet's logic to its extreme and its fallacy is immediately revealed. If you call a man a monkey, you instantly degrade him in the scale of being. If you classify him with stocks and stones, you dehumanize him and totally ignore those qualities which are the only basis of his real dignity. "What's in a name?" Let this be our answer to the question: Much every way, when applied to Deity. Is he Father or Force?

In the latter half of the nineteenth century *Science* began to talk of a GREAT FIRST CAUSE. May we write it in capital letters, or only with a tiny c? Is Cause a surname or only a pseudonym? Does it represent a Person or merely a power? If it only denotes a giant force, blind, unreasoning, unmoral, without heart of appreciation or spirit of compassion, then in fashioning you it fashioned a creature far loftier than itself. The less cannot produce the greater. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" Have we vision, and the thing that caused us to be be stone blind? Can we thrill to the rapture of music, and it be deaf? Have we within our breast the majesty of conscience and the desire after holiness, and yet be the offspring of mere conscienceless force? Has man's mind no intellectual progenitor, or his spiritual hunger no answering benediction of spiritual food, spread on a Father's table and mediated by a Father's hand? It is true, no man hath seen God at any time, and yet, although we can discern no shape of Deity, we are compelled to assume the existence, somewhere, of a Being infinitely greater than ourselves, dowered with mightier moral attributes and vested with a larger pity. The alternative is unthinkable, irrational, mocking the mind and revolting the deepest instincts of the heart of man. The dust cannot shape itself into beauty. Yet Something shaped it; and we see the glory and the excellence of that great Craftsman in all his handiwork. Thought presupposes mind; and design is still a valid argument for Deity. Man's moral nature can only be the reflection of a moral

order, which has its own code of laws and righteous Governor. The passionate longing for survival after death, which is characteristic of all men, everywhere, seems to suggest that immortality was part of the original dower of humanity. Slowly, but surely, secularism is being undermined. It is not yet ousted, but its most advanced entrenchments are becoming more and more precarious. Not long ago Robert Blatchford confessed that the exploration of the atom had cured him of atheism. Since science has discovered that every molecule is made up of electrons in ceaseless motion, that in the most vital sense there is no such thing as "dead matter"—even the rocks are alive, palpitant with the dynamic of eternity—men's minds have begun steadily to move toward God. Do not be content with ancient treatises, written in a materialistic temper. The great agnostics have had their day. Text-books of even ten years ago are already out of date. The most modern science, while not actually Christian, is neither atheistic, nor agnostic. With Bergson in France, and Eucken in Germany, and Sir Oliver Lodge in England, both science and philosophy are turning toward a spiritual interpretation of the universe.

"A fire-mist, and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly fish and a saurian,
And caves where cave-men dwell.
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod:
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God."

—(*William Herbert Carruth.*)

The echo of ancient chanting,
The gleam of altar flames,
The stones of a hundred temples,
Graven with sacred names:
Man's patient quest for the secret
In soul, in star, in sod;
Some deem it superstition,
And others believe it God.

"Tell me thy name," cried wrestling Jacob, driven to his knees by his unequal combat with the Unseen. And that same importunate cry has leaped from the lips of each succeeding generation. In the midnight blackness of doubt and fear; in the noonday splendor of discovery and achievement, men have felt themselves face to face with Something, intangible, inscrutable, and have stretched out blind hands to apprehend the Apparition which eluded their eager grasp. "Tell me thy name," they have cried in their physical anguish and spiritual distress; but to that urgent request there has rarely come an immediate and all-comprehensive answer. There are mysteries of the Divine Being we are not competent to elucidate. There are secrets of his nature we are not permitted to explore. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." If our knowledge of Deity were made as obvious and explicit as the facts recorded in to-morrow morning's newspaper, the thought of God would soon become trite and commonplace and men would forget their reverence. How gradually the curtain has been lifted from those august sanctities which the angels desire to look into and are not able! The light of revelation did not come with the swift surprise of a tropic dawn. Even now we see

through a glass darkly. God has to veil the splendor which otherwise would blind us with excess of light. To the world's gray fathers he was Adonai Elohim, Jehovah, Lord of hosts, and at the annunciation of that sacred name they felt "the speechless awe which dares not move, but trembles at his word." To them he was the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Judge of quick and dead. Those titles of majesty and might set forth some of the essential facts and functions of his government, but the ideas connoted by the facts became the inspiration of their fear and dread.

Moses in Midian felt the need of a sufficient signature to his charter of emancipation. "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, What is his name, what shall I say unto them? And God saith unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. . . . This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." There is deep significance in that title of the Self-Existing and Supreme; but I wonder if it satisfied the hungering heart of that first apostle of redemption? "I AM THAT I AM," wrapped the Deity in a mystery more profound than the glory which caused the desert bush to blaze, and turned the wilderness into an awesome sanctuary of his presence.

David invented a definition more dear to human hearts, and more understandable by finite minds. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." That phrase brought God down to the level of the sheepfolds, in close proximity to our necessitous and defenseless life.

Even Isaiah, with all his raptured vision of the King Eternal, sitting upon the throne high and lifted up, adopted David's idea and represented Deity feeding his flock like a shepherd, gathering the lambs with his arm and carrying them in his bosom. Such an idea begins to make us feel at home with Deity. It stills the trembling soul and hushes its most poignant fear. We can appreciate a God, however glorious, so long as he condescends to men of low estate, pitying our weakness and pardoning our sins.

But psalm and prophecy were alike preparatory to the gospel of the Son. It was Jesus who made known the final fact of God's nature and his name. "After this manner, therefore, pray ye, Our Father, which art in heaven." Familiarity has dulled our minds to the surprising splendor of that revelation; but even our familiarity cannot rob us of its rich content. Isaac Watts asks in wonder:

> "And will this sovereign King
> Of Glory condescend;
> And will he write his name,
> My Father, and my Friend?"

He has both written it in his Word and witnessed it in our hearts. Our filial relation to the Highest was not of our invention; it is the amazing miracle of his grace. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Therein is the answer to the riddle of the ages. God is neither fetish nor force, but "Our Father, which art in heaven." That is his name; sublime in its simplicity,

yet all-embracing in its wide implications. Eternity itself can yield no revelation more luminous than that, or unveil a source of consolation more satisfying to the souls of men.

"And his Son's name? Canst thou tell?" Go back into the school of the prophets and see how they learned to spell it out. Everywhere there is a pulse of expectation. Dimly they descry his coming, and with gladness anticipate his birth. Isaiah calls him "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." All these are titles of distinction, but while they heighten our admiration, they do not touch our deepest tragedy. The prophet also calls him, "A Man of Sorrows," and in my personal Via Dolorosa I shall hail the companionship of One who is so intimately acquainted with grief. But has he no other name which corresponds more nearly with my mood of shame and consciousness of dire defeat? Malachi ventures a promise which shines like a shaft of light, "The Sun of righteousness shall arise, with healing in his wings." To that assurance hope begins to stir within my breast. I have dwelt so long in the darkness, with broken heart and wounded spirit, that the morning Star will be a welcome guest in my black sky. Only the tenants of the night can appreciate the dawn. Only those who have stumbled, blindly, through some gorge of gloom can chant "the tender mercy of our God: whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light unto them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." But Sun! Star! Dayspring! Has he no other

name? Is there no further word that will cool the fever of my sin-infected spirit, and heal the festering wounds which are sapping my life away? Is there neither man nor angel capable of exploring my deep anguish and charged with a name which shall be as God's talisman to me when I am hard beset by the foe? Yes! By Bethlehem's manger there stands a shining one, intrusted with a message of radiant redemption, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." That is the word the world has waited for. That is the name my soul has pined to hear. It is the consummation of all prophecy, and sums up into itself all the music of the psalms.

"Jesus! the name to sinners dear,
The name to sinners given;
It scatters all their guilty fear,
It turns their hell to heaven."

You will never know the Son's name until you spell it out in "Saviour." Every other name falls short of his inestimable splendor and our unutterable woe.

"Jesus, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest and King."

Yes, all those, and others of glorious import beside; but it is the name they gave him at his birth that supplies the balm for our deep bruising, until the bones which sin had broken do rejoice.

"Jesus! the name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky,
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly."

I want the name that conquers Satan under my feet. I want the name that shatters the dungeon door, loosens my fetters, cleanses my foulness, ends my captivity and makes me free indeed. If you have only a Prophet of Galilee to offer me, a man who taught eternal truth, and lived a pure life, leaving me an example that I might follow in his steps, he is worse than valueless to me. His truth I cannot translate into action. His purity challenges my tragic failure, but provides no dynamic by which I too may overcome. Sin has brought me into such moral impotence and spiritual slavery that if ever I am to be emancipated into the glad freedom of the sons of God, there must come to me, in my desperate weakness, a strong Deliverer, with energy sufficient to save me to the uttermost. That is what I have found in Jesus. That is why that name has become to me the name which is above every name.

"Sweetest note in seraph's song,
Sweetest name on mortal tongue;
Sweetest carol ever sung,
Jesus! blessed Jesus!"

But has he no other name? Have I exhausted his redeeming potency when I have proved his power to save me from my sins? There is another battle I have to fight, in the valley of the shadows, where a grim monster has its lair—a monster of whom all men stand in jeopardy every hour, and of whom all men are afraid. Has Jesus no anodyne for Death? Anodyne! He has something finer than an anodyne—a victory which issues in the annihilation of the adversary. Not

alone to that stricken home in Bethany he comes, but to every similarly darkened household where the circle has been invaded and apparently broken by the destroyer. Not alone by the grave of Lazarus he stands, but by the side of those deep pits of sorrow which we ourselves have dug. In the bitter grief of our bereavement, we begin to say, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." "He is not dead, but sleepeth," he makes reply. "Not dead?" we question in astonishment; "but the eyes which were the homes of light have lost their luster, and his cold lips make no answer to the call of my affection."

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."

Then to our sad souls he preaches a gospel, high as heaven and wide as the ageless life of God: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never, never die." The Resurrection and the Life! Is that his name? Yes, that also is his name; for He hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. What a gospel that is for sin-haunted, death-hunted men and women! Hear his triumphant proclamation, ye fearful and astonished ones. "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." "I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord; which is, and

which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." "And on his vesture and on his thigh was a name written KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS." That also is the name of this great Conqueror of Death, who by his death hath delivered those who all their life long were in bondage to the fear of death. "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER,
KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,
FOR EVER AND EVER, HALLELUJAH!
FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT."

XII

PIONEERS OF PROGRESS

Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.—*Isaiah* 62. 10.

We must go back a few pages in this prophecy in order to appreciate the music of this gospel of redemption. We must study contemporary history if we would truly understand the urgency of this appeal. Fifty years before, the city of Jerusalem had been besieged by the armies of Babylon, and for eighteen months the dreadful strife ceased neither day nor night. Black famine, gaunt pestilence, and cruel death became the grim triumvirate controlling the councils of the city. "Upon the streets, the pining children, the stricken princes, the groups of men lean with hunger, the rotting heaps of slain, mothers feeding on the bodies of the infants whom their sapless breasts could no longer keep alive; by the walls, the hanging and crucifixion of multitudes with all the fashion of Chaldean cruelty; whilst upon the hills around the neighboring tribes are gathered to jeer at the destruction of Jerusalem." Such is the picture which Sir George Adam Smith has painted of this City of Dreadful Night. Then came the inevitable end. The inner gate yielded before the importunity of battle. The merciless foemen, exasperated by the

stubbornness of the defenders, allowed their unbridled fury to do its worst. Nothing was sacred in the sight of the aliens. The whole city was given up to ruthless destruction. The Temple of Jehovah was sacked and burned. The palace of the king and the houses of his nobles became as so much fuel for the fire, and the stout walls that resisted the conflagration were torn down into ignominious heaps of ruin.

The fate of the city found its parallel in the doom of her unhappy citizens. Multitudes were slain. The king's sons were put to death before his sight; and in order that that dread scene might be the last upon which he should ever look, they barbarously thrust out his eyes and carried him captive into Babylon, while the remnant of the nation, over which he had reigned, became the slaves of the invading host. Isaiah's prophecy of retribution had been at last fulfilled; the exile was utterly and awfully complete. Thus there settled down upon Judah and Jerusalem the long dark night of a nation's doom, and for half a century no ray of light pierced the thick cloud of their captivity. Through the gloom we may hear the echo of their sighs, as they sat by the waters of Babylon and mingled their tears with the swift-flowing streams. The life of the nation had become a chaos, a conflicting tumult of suffering and sin, remorse and revenge; fear and shame and hate alternating with despair. But the deepest surge of all in that whirlpool of misery was the surge of sin. In their bondage the exiles learned that their sufferings were not an undeserved calamity. Beneath the stern yoke of the

oppressor the majesty of conscience was restored, its function vindicated. Behind them lay the dark ages of delinquent history; and as they read the stained, polluted page, penitence began its gracious work. Prone upon the dust they made confession of their sins, acknowledging their guilt and accepting the penalty as the just sentence of an offended Deity.

This was the point to which their captivity was designed to lead them; and God's purpose having been accomplished, the period of their punishment must end. In the fortieth chapter a new note is heard in the stillness of the night. It is the voice of the herald, proclaiming the approach of dawn. The darkness is passing away. The day of liberty is breaking. How tenderly the music pulses through the air: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

That proclamation of pardon is the condition of all subsequent blessing. The forgiveness of sins is the necessary prelude to the anthem of salvation. But scarcely has the voice of comfort ceased than another voice is heard. It is the call to service, to strenuous endeavor—"in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." The good news of pardon is only the beginning of God's great salvation. The emancipation is not yet complete. The prophet's eyes are lifted toward the far-off city of Jerusalem, and as in thought

he traverses the weary miles of wilderness and desert that intervene, he sees the dark ravines which must be bridged, the steep, forbidding mountain heights which must be made low. The returning hosts are not made up of mail-clad heroes, flushed with the pride of victory. They are captives who have spent their strength in bitter servitude, weary mothers and helpless little children. The old man is there who never hoped to see the dawning of redemption. Such a mixed multitude of feeble folk need adequate provision for their manifold infirmities. The way must be prepared before the ransomed of the Lord can come again to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

And so with clarion tones, the prophet bids the pioneers "Go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." It is the appeal of God to all that is heroic in the nation's life. Only the stalwart souls, ready to do and dare, can obey the call. The demand has come for practical patriotism and every man must prove his citizenship by sacrifice. It is no longer the time for hanging harps upon the willows and chanting the dirge of a departed glory. This is the time for action. The day has dawned, the gates are opening, the weary exiles, longing for liberty, lift their faces toward Mount Zion and are eager to depart. And in such an hour it becomes the imperative duty of all true sons of Israel to make the possibility of return a glorious reality. Between the Euphrates and the Jor-

dan there lay the savage wilderness with its sun-scorched desert, mountain peak and rocky gorge in formidable array; and the distance must be bridged by a path along which even the feeblest life might find its way back to its inheritance in Zion. Hence the command to gather out the stones. Every stumbling-block must be removed. Every barrier impeding the nation's progress must be broken down; so that when, at last, the emancipated hosts commence the exodus from Babylon, they may run and not be weary, they may walk and not faint.

Such was the call of God to the men of purpose in this crisis of a nation's history. And, ringing down through all the ages, the same call echoes in our ears to-day. To every man of clear conscience and conviction there comes the command of God, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people." The day is dawning, and they who hitherto have sat in darkness have seen a great light. They are lifting weary eyes to the far-off city of God; but between them and that distant goal there looms the wilderness of sin, with its snares and pitfalls and innumerable perils, and the danger is that in some hidden wady they may lose sight of the sunlit hills of Zion and fail to reach the City Beautiful. The mirage of the desert, with its subtle fascination, bids them haste and then mocks their eager quest; and unless their feet are directed into the true path of progress, they will inevitably fall, and falling they may never rise again. Cast up the highway, gather out the stones that there may be no occasion for any man

to stumble. Lift up a standard for the people that they be no longer leaderless. Rally the scattered forces which have been badly beaten in life's battle and tell them that the day is not yet lost. Sound the advance, for victory may yet be achieved in the name and strength of God.

"Eyes rekindling, and prayers
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God!"

That is a modern rendering of the ancient battle-cry wherewith the prophet of the Lord inspired the heart of Israel; and through the centuries the prophets and saviours of the race, at sundry times and in divers languages, have uttered the same call. In response to their appeal, enthusiastic sons of God have arisen to discharge the duty of the pioneers in preparing the way of the people. Are we not in danger of underestimating our indebtedness to the past? Our present position was not attained in a day. The priceless privileges we enjoy are the bequests of the generations which have preceded us. Our civil freedom and religious liberty are the fruits of suffering and pain, the outcome of love and life and death, and those who have fallen in the struggle have handed on the flag of victory that we might ever bear it forward.

The progress of the world is based upon sacrifice and toil. In spite of the pessimism which prevails in certain quarters, the undoubted fact remains, patent

to all who have eyes to see, that the old world is moving out into the light of a wider day. In the sixteenth century a body of men bearing the name of Inquisitors met in the City of Rome to decree the immobility of the earth. Before them stood a prisoner whose brow was illumined by the light of genius. He had outstripped his generation and revealed the secret of a world. It was Galileo, the discoverer of a universe in motion. The old man's soul revolted against the absurd violence of those who sought to compel him to deny the truth revealed to him by God. But the stern discipline of suffering had broken the force of his indomitable will. He strove to submit. Lifting his trembling hand in token of assent, he too declared the fixity of the earth. But even as he uttered the recantation of his faith, remorse surged through the believer's soul. An involuntary cry escaped his lips *"Eppur si muove!"* ("And yet it moves, it moves!") Ah, thank God the prejudice of the passing hour cannot alter the eternal fact. It moves! Neither Pope, nor priest, nor man, nor devil can stop it moving. The sublime cry of Galileo is God's answer to our doubting hearts. This earth of ours has been redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with precious blood, and through much travail and sorrow it is being brought back to the very heart of God.

"Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range;
Let the great world spin forever the ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger
day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

And is it possible that we should stand aloof from the progress of the ages? Are we content to be carried as mere driftwood on the surface of the tide? Shall we not rather join our strength to the forces that are in operation all around us, and bring what power we possess to bear upon the uplifting of the race?

"We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move;
The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun;
The dark Earth follows, wheel'd in her ellipse;
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year."

Before us there are opportunities for service, possibilities of conquest, the like of which the world has never seen before. "Go through, go through the gates." Let there be no laggards, lolling in inglorious ease. Do not let us seek to shirk the responsibilities which rest upon us. The imperative command of God is that we should prepare the way of the people. Under present conditions progress is intensely difficult to the vast majority of our fellow men. The quicksands of folly and the quagmires of iniquity hinder their approach to the way of holiness. The barrier of ancient customs must be broken down, the briars of temptation must be rooted out, and across the trackless bog of human misery we must build the highway of the Lord.

Do you say it is impossible? That is precisely what

they told George Stephenson when he proposed to build a railway from Liverpool to Manchester. Chat Moss was in the way, and the most expert engineers declared Chat Moss to be an insurmountable difficulty. A parliamentary commission was appointed to inspect the plans. In their abysmal ignorance they laughed the self-taught engineer to scorn. They questioned his sanity, and pronounced his schemes the wild projects of a madman's brain. But the whole world knows where the laugh comes in to-day. For while those chuzzle-headed senators, who had not wit enough to recognize a genius when they saw him, are lying in their forgotten graves, George Stephenson is marching across five continents to victory. The impossible became an accomplished fact.

And as we look across the dark morass of human woe and sin and helplessness; when we take into consideration the frailty of human nature and its constant bias toward evil, we are sometimes tempted to believe that the path to heaven can never be constructed across the unstable waste of a sin-cursed world. "It is impossible!" Yes! that has been the devil's cry through all the ages. Have ye never read, "With God all things are possible"? If we will but link our weakness on to God's omnipotence, that discouraging word "impossible" may be erased from our vocabulary.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, 'It shall be done!'"

But that means work; for faith without works is dead. The impossible can be accomplished only by the men who pray as though the issue depended upon God, and work as though the issue depended upon themselves alone. In the name of God I call for pioneers, to prepare the way of the Lord. Your psalm-singing and your sermon-hearing is not service. It may be worship, but it is not work. God calls you out into the world with all its manifold need of sacrificial toil. Get out of your comfortably cushioned pews and begin to build God's highway. The church is suffering from a plethora of gentlemen-foremen who go round with a pair of kid gloves on and tell other people how the job ought to be done. They carp and criticize and complain about the powerlessness of the church and all the while they are doing nothing to make it an effective fighting force. The world is sick—sick to its very soul—of these arm-chair philosophers who sit and dream of the Utopian age, when all waste lands shall be reclaimed, while their own strip of garden is covered over with thorns, rejected, and nigh unto a curse.

My young brethren, I appeal to you. For this purpose were you born into the world, that you might attempt great tasks and commit yourselves to a glorious crusade. Your voice will help to shape our national destiny, and the prosperity of the future depends upon your present choice. How are you facing your responsibilities? What are you doing for your church, for your country, for your God? As I think of the wealth of young life all around us, the energies

that are being wasted, aye and worse than wasted, in the pursuit of phantom pleasures, I feel that I cannot hold my peace. Thousands are loafing their time away in mental idleness and spiritual sloth, and all the while God is calling them to the conquest of the world. O young men! "Awake! Awake! put on thy strength, put on thy beautiful garments, loose thyself from the bands of thy neck." Commence the conquest of your own life, and in virtue of that victory all others will be made easy. Let us determine that by God's grace we will leave the old world better than we found it. Let us so live and love and labor that our fellow men shall have occasion to bless the name of God that ever we were born. Can any healthy ambition crave a destiny that is higher or more glorious than that? It is within reach of every man who is willing to attempt great things for God. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway" which the very devil shall be powerless to undermine. Let us build a road by which it shall be easy for the ransomed of the Lord to come again to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

"Gather out the stones" that hinder so many of our fellow men from running the race set before them. The path to heaven is uphill; and in climbing that steep ascent men need no rocks of difficulty to moderate their speed. The best men are most conscious of the barriers which hinder their approach to God. But is it no reproach to us that there are thousands who stumble and fall over the stones which lust and

greed have deliberately placed within their path? Surely, it is one of the greatest anomalies of our modern civilization that the same legislature which punishes a man for getting drunk is responsible for putting up at each street corner an incitement to evildoing. We must break down this tyranny of iniquity; we must sweep away the chronic evils and wrongs which have darkened the human mind and become the unmitigated curse of the human race. We can never cease from toil until public law and administration are on the side of private virtue and civic righteousness; until men shall find it easy to do right and difficult to do wrong.

"Lift up a standard for the people." What standard can we raise, but the standard of the cross; the banner that has been baptized with blood? This is the flag beneath which martyrs strode to victory, and the heroes of the earth have counted not their lives dear unto them that they might carry it into every land. When the great French nation rose to the task of self-emancipation, they inscribed upon their banners "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," and we are apt to forget that they are stolen words. They form an essential part of the gospel; and through the ages they have been the watchwords of Christianity. In lifting the banner of the cross, we raise the standard of the brotherhood of man, of civic and religious liberty, of the glory and excellency of the kingdom of our God and of his Christ; and round this thrice blessed banner we must rally the forces of the world and follow the flag to victory.

For ever ours! for good or ill, on us the burden lies;
God's balance, watched by angels, is hung across the skies.
Shall Justice, Truth, and Freedom turn the poised and trembling scale,
Or shall the evil triumph, and robber wrong prevail?
The day is breaking in the East of which the prophets told,
And brightens up the sky of Time—The Christian age of gold.
Old Might to Right is yielding, battle blade to clerkly pen;
Earth's monarchs are her peoples, and her serfs stand up as men.
The Crisis presses on us; face to face with us it stands,
With solemn lips of question, like the Sphinx in Egypt's sands.
This day we fashion Destiny, our web of fate we spin;
This day, for all hereafter, choose we holiness or sin.
By all for which the martyrs bore their agony and shame;
By all the warning words of truth with which the prophets came;
By the Future which awaits us; by all the hopes which cast
Their faint and trembling beams across the blackness of the past;
And by the blessed thought of Him who for Earth's freedom died,
O my people! O my brothers! let us choose the righteous side.

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